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NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

Сборник материалов
по интерпретации текста

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Предлагаемый сборник материалов представляет опыт изучения текста и анализа его содержания с целью совершенствования приобретенных на предшествующих курсах навыков интерпретации текста. Текстовой материал, разнообразный по форме и жанру, составляют оригинальные произведения наиболее значительных писателей различных направлений. Это позволит студентам не только познакомиться с выдающимися авторами, но и выявить их художественное своеобразие. Хронологическое расположение материала не предусматривалось.

Сборник содержит образцы анализа-интерпретации текста, лингвистические и литературоведческие принципы анализа, творческие примеры интерпретации текста, подготовленные студентами 5 курса отделения английского языка ИИЯ Уральского государственного педагогического университета, а также отрывки для самостоятельного анализа. В сборник включены несколько анализов одного и того же отрывка с тем, чтобы читатели смогли сравнить различные подходы и представить свое понимание текста. Предназначается для преподавателей, а также студентов IV — V курсов педагогических и лингвистических университетов.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

I. An Instructional Study Guide

The following questions below are grouped by literary and linguistic principles and will give you an idea of the type of information you will be seeking when you analyze a literary selection.

MEANING:

- What is the work about? What is its theme?
- What effect or impression does the work have on the reader?
- What is the argument or summary of the work?
- What is the writer's intent?

FORM:

- How has the writer organized the literary work to achieve the effect or express the meaning?
- How is the work structured or planned? As prose or poetry? As topics or scenes? As a long narrative, several short stories, or episodes?
- Into what genre (type or category) could the work be placed?
- What method of organization or pattern of development was used within the structure of the work?

VOICE AND TONE:

- Who is telling the story?
- How is the speaker or narrator characterized (his or her character revealed)? By action or description? Expressed or implied?

- From what perspective is the story told? By a person outside the story or by someone actually involved in the narrative?
- Is the speaker (the one telling the story) and the author or writer of the work the same person. If the writer and the speaker are two different individuals, are their attitudes toward the subject, events, and readers the same or different?
- What is the author's attitude toward the material, subject, or theme?
- What is the speaker's attitude (if different from the author) toward the material, subject, or theme? Toward the reader? Is the tone playful? Serious? Angry? Formal? Pleading? Joyful?
- What is the atmosphere of the work (the way in which the mood, setting, and feeling blend together to convey the prevailing tone)?

CHARACTER (IZATION):

- Who are the people in the work?
- How do dialogue (what he or she says) and action (what he or she does) reveal a character's personality traits?
- Is there a principal character?
- What is the character's motivation?
- Is the character's personality revealed directly by the speaker telling the reader or indirectly by the character's own words and deeds (requiring the reader to come to conclusions about the character based on dialogue and action)?
- In a nonnarrative work, how would you characterize the speaker or the writer? How would you characterize the work itself?

LANGUAGE (USES AND MEANINGS):

- Does the selection include any imagery (the use of sensory images to represent someone or something)?
- What figures of speech does the writer use, and what effect do they have on the meaning of the selection?
- How does the writer use diction (word choice) to convey meaning?
- What is the impact of the words, phrases, and lines as they are used in the selection?
- Did the writer intend the words used to convey the meanings normally assigned to those words (the denotations)?
- Did the writer intend that some words would imply additional, associated meanings for the reader (connotations)?
- What is the significance of those implications to the meaning of the selection and the intent of the writer?
- How does the use of denotation, connotation, and syntax (how the words are structured and grouped to form meaningful thought units) relate to the style of the selection?
- Does the language of the selection include any elements of propaganda?

[Source: *Christina Myers-Shaffer*, M. Ed. The principles of literature: a guide for readers and writers / Barron's Educational Series, Inc. N. Y. 2000. 390 p.]

II. A Case Study:
Katherine Mansfield. The Garden-Party

And after all the weather was ideal. They could not have had a more perfect day for a garden-party if they had ordered it. Windless, warm the sky without a cloud. Only the blue was veiled with a haze of light gold, as it is sometimes in early summer. The gardener had been up since dawn, mowing the lawns and sweeping them, until the grass and the dark flat rosettes where the daisy plants had been seemed to shine. As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden-parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds, had come out in a single night; the green bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by archangels.

Breakfast was not yet over before the men came to put up the marquee.

«Where do you want the marquee put, mother?»

«My dear child, it's no use asking me. I'm determined to leave everything to you children this year. Forget I am your mother. Treat me as an honoured guest.»

But Meg could not possibly go and supervise the men. She had washed her hair before breakfast, and she sat drinking her coffee in a green turban, with a dark wet curl stamped on each cheek. Jose, the butterfly, always came down in a silk petticoat and a kimono jacket.

«You'll have to go, Laura; you're the artistic one.»

Away Laura flew, still holding her piece of bread-and-butter. It's so delicious to have an excuse for eating out of doors and, besides, she loved having to arrange things; she always felt she could do it so much better than anybody else.

Four men in their shirt-sleeves stood grouped together on the garden path. They carried staves covered with rolls of canvas and they had big tool-bags slung on their backs. They looked impressive. Laura wished now that she was not holding that piece of bread-and-butter, but there was nowhere to put it and she couldn't possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look severe and even a little bit short-sighted as she came up to them.

«Good morning,» she said, copying her mother's voice. But that sounded so fearfully affected that she was ashamed, and stammered like a little girl, «Oh-er-have you come-is it about the marquee?»

«That's right, miss,» said the tallest of the men, a lanky, freckled fellow, and he shifted his tool-bag, knocked back his straw hat and smiled down at her. «That's about it.»

His smile was so easy, so friendly, that Laura recovered. What nice eyes he had, small, but such a dark blue! And now she looked at the others, they were smiling too. «Cheer up, we won't bite,» their smile seemed to say. How very nice workmen were! And what a beautiful morning! She mustn't mention the morning; she must be businesslike. The marquee.

«Well, what about the lily-lawn? Would that do?»

And she pointed to the lily-lawn with the hand that didn't hold the bread-and-butter. They turned, they stared in the direction. A little fat chap thrust out his underlip and the tall fellow frowned.

«I don't fancy it,» said he. «Not conspicuous enough. You see, with a thing like a marquee»— and he turned to Laura in his easy way — »you want to put it somewhere where it'll give you a bang slap in the eye, if you follow me.

Laura's upbringing made her wonder for a moment whether it was quite respectful of a workman to talk to her of bangs slap in the eye. But she did quite follow him.

«A corner of the tennis-court,» she suggested. «But the band's going to be in one corner.»

«H'm, going to have a band, are you?» said another of the workmen. He was pale. He had a haggard look as his dark eyes scanned the tennis-court. What was he thinking?

«Only a very small band,» said Laura gently. Perhaps he wouldn't mind so much if the band was quite small. But the tall fellow interrupted.

«Look here, miss, that's the place. Against those trees. Over there. That'll do fine.

Against the karakas. Then the karaka trees would be hidden. And they were so lovely, with their broad, gleaming leaves, and their clusters of yellow fruit. They were like trees you imagined growing on a desert island, proud, solitary, lifting their leaves and fruits to the sun in a kind of silent splendour. Must they be hidden by a marquee?

They must. Already the men had shouldered their staves and were making for the place. Only the tall fellow was left. He bent down, pinched a sprig of lavender, put his thumb and forefinger to his nose and snuffed up the smell. When Laura saw that gesture she forgot all about the karakas in her wonder at him caring for things like that — caring for the smell of lavender. How many men that she knew would have done such a thing. Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought. Why couldn't she have workmen for friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper? She would get on much better with men like these.

It's all the fault, she decided, as the tall fellow drew something on the back of an envelope, something that was to be looped up or left to hang, of these absurd class distinctions. Well, for her part, she didn't feel them. Not a bit, not an atom. And now there came the chock-chock of wooden hammers. Someone whistled, someone sang out, «Are you right there, matey?» «Matey!» The friendliness of it, the — the — just to prove how happy she was, just to show the tall fellow how at

home she felt, and how she despised stupid conventions, Laura took a big bite of her bread-and-butter as she stared at the little drawing. She felt just like a work-girl.

«Laura, Laura, where are you? Telephone, Laura!» a voice cried from the house.

«Coming!» Away she skimmed over the lawn, up the path, up the steps, across the veranda and into the porch. In the hall her father and Laurie were brushing their hats ready to go to the office.

«I say, Laura,» said Laurie very fast, «you might just give a squiz at my coat before this afternoon. See if it wants pressing.»

«I will,» said she. Suddenly she couldn't stop herself. She ran at Laurie and gave him a small, quick squeeze. «Oh, I do love parties, don't you?» gasped Laura.

«Ra-ther,» said Laurie's warm, boyish voice, and he squeezed his sister too and gave her a gentle push. «Dash off to the telephone, old girl.»

The telephone. «Yes, yes; oh yes. Kitty? Good morning, dear. Come to lunch? Do, dear. Delighted, of course. It will only be a very scratch meal — just the sandwich crusts and broken meringue-shells and what's left over. Yes, isn't it a perfect morning? Your white? Oh, I certainly should. One moment — hold the line. Mother's calling.» And Laura sat back. «What, mother? Can't hear.»

Mrs. Sheridan's voice floated down the stairs. «Tell her to wear that sweet hat she had on last Sunday.»

«Mother says you're to wear that *sweet* hat you had on last Sunday. Good. One o'clock. Bye-bye.»

Laura put back the receiver, flung her arms over her head, took a deep breath, stretched and let them fall. «Huh,» she sighed, and the moment after the sigh she sat up quickly. She was still, listening. All the doors in the house seemed to be open. The house was alive with soft, quick steps and running voices. The green baize door that led to the

kitchen regions swung open and shut with a muffled thud. And now there came a long, chuckling absurd sound. It was the heavy piano being moved on its stiff castors. But the air! If you stopped to notice, was the air always like this? Little faint winds were playing chase in at the tops of the windows, out at the doors. And there were two tiny spots of sum, one on the inkpot, one on a silver photograph frame, playing too. Darling little spots. Especially the one on the inkpot lid. It was quite warm. A warm little silver star. She could have kissed it.

The front door bell pealed and there sounded the rustle of Sadie's print skirt on the stairs. A man's voice murmured; Sadie answered, careless, «I'm sure I don't know. Wait. I'll ask Mrs. Sheridan.»

«What is it, Sadie?» Laura came into the hall.

«It's the florist, Miss Laura.»

It was, indeed. There, just inside the door, stood a wide, shallow tray full of pots of pink lilies. No other kind. Nothing but lilies — canna lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, radiant, almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson stems.

«O-oh, Sadie!» said Laura, and the sound was like a little moan. She crouched down as if to warm herself at that blaze of lilies; she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing in her breast.

«It's some mistake,» she said faintly. «Nobody ever ordered so many. Sadie, go and find mother.»

But at that moment Mrs. Sheridan joined them.

«It's quite right,» she said calmly. «Yes, I ordered them. Aren't they lovely?» She pressed Laura's arm. «I was passing the shop yesterday, and I saw them in the window. And I suddenly thought for once in my life I shall have enough canna lilies. The garden-party will be a good excuse.»

«But I thought you said you didn't mean to interfere,» said Laura. Sadie had gone. The florist's man was still outside at his van. She put

her arm round her mother's neck and gently, very gently, she bit her mother's ear.

«My darling child, you wouldn't like a logical mother, would you? Don't do that. Here's the man.»

He carried more lilies still, another whole tray.

«Bank them up, just inside the door, on both sides of the porch, please,» said Mrs. Sheridan. «Don't you agree, Laura?»

«Oh, I *do*, mother.»

In the drawing-room Meg, Jose and good little Hans had at last succeeded in moving the piano.

«Now, if we put this chesterfield against the wall and move everything out of the room except the chairs, don't you think?»

«Quite.»

«Hans, move these tables into the smoking-room, and bring a sweeper to take these marks off the carpet and — one moment, Hans —» Jose loved giving orders to the servants and they loved obeying her. She always made them feel they were taking part in some drama. «Tell mother and Miss Laura to come here at once.»

«Very good, Miss Jose.»

She turned to Meg. «I want to hear what the piano sounds like, just in case I'm asked to sing this afternoon. Let's try over 'This Life is Weary.'»

Pom! Ta-ta-ta *Tee-ta!* The piano burst out so passionately that Jose's face changed. She clasped her hands. She looked mournfully and enigmatically at her mother and Laura as they came in.

This Life is *Wee-ary,*

A Tear—a Sigh.

A Love that *Chan-ges,*

This Life is *Wee-ary,*

A Tear—a Sigh.

A Love that *Chan-ges,*

And then... Good-bye!

But at the word «Good-bye,» and although the piano sounded more desperate than ever, her face broke into a brilliant, dreadfully unsympathetic smile.

«Aren't I in good voice, mummy,» she beamed.

This Life is *Wee-ary,*

Hope comes to Die.

A Dream—a Wakening.

But now Sadie interrupted them. «What is it, Sadie?»

«If you please, m'm, cook says have you got the flags for the sandwiches?»

«The flags for the sandwiches, Sadie?» echoed Mrs. Sheridan dreamily. And the children knew by her face that she hadn't got them. «Let me see.» And she said to Sadie firmly, «Tell cook I'll let her have them in ten minutes.»

Sadie went.

«Now Laura,» said her mother quickly, «come with me into the smoking-room. I've got the 'names somewhere on the back of an envelope. You'll have to write them out for me. Meg, go upstairs this minute and take that wet thing off your head. Jose, run and finish dressing this instant. Do you hear me, children, or shall I have to tell your father when he comes home tonight? And —and, Jose, pacify cook if you do go into the kitchen, will you? I'm terrified of her this morning.»

The envelope was found at last behind the dining-room clock, though how it had got there Mrs. Sheridan could not imagine.

«One of you children must have stolen it out of my bag, because I remember vividly — cream-cheese and lemon-curd. Have you done that?»

«Yes.»

«Egg and —» Mrs. Sheridan held the envelope away from her. «It looks like mice. It can't be mice, can it?»

«Olive, pet,» said Laura, looking over her shoulder.

«Yes, of course, olive. What a horrible combination it sounds. Egg and olive.»

They were finished at last, and Laura took them off to the kitchen. She found Jose there pacifying the cook, who did not look at all terrifying.

«I have never seen such exquisite sandwiches,» said Jose's rapturous voice. «How many kinds did you say there were, cook? Fifteen?»

«Fifteen, Miss Jose.»

«Well, cook, I congratulate you.»

Cook swept up crusts with the long sandwich knife, and smiled broadly.

«Godber's has come,» announced Sadie, issuing out of the pantry. She had seen the man pass the window.

That meant the cream puffs had come. Godber's were famous for their cream puffs. Nobody ever thought of making them at home.

«Bring them in and put them on the table, my girl,» ordered cook.

Sadie brought them in and went back to the door. Of course Laura and Jose were far too grown-up to really care about such things. All the same, they couldn't help agreeing that the puffs looked very attractive. Very. Cook began arranging them, shaking off the extra icing sugar.

«Don't they carry one back to all one's parties?» said Laura.

«I suppose they do,» said practical Jose, who never liked to be carried back. «They look beautifully light and feathery, I must say.»

«Have one each, my dears,» said cook in her comfortable voice. «Yer ma won't know.»

Oh, impossible. Fancy cream puffs so soon after breakfast. The very idea made one shudder. All the same, two minutes later Jose and Laura were licking their fingers with that absorbed inward look that only comes from whipped cream.

«Let's go into the garden, out by the back way,» suggested Laura. «I want to see how the men are getting on with the marquee. They're such awfully nice men.»

But the back door was blocked by cook, Sadie, Godber's man and Hans.

Something had happened.

«Tuk-tuk-tuk,» clucked cook like an agitated hen. Sadie 'had her hand clapped to 'her cheek as though she had toothache. Hans' face was screwed up in the effort to understand. Only Godber's man seemed to be enjoying himself; it was his story.

«What's the matter? What's happened?»

«There's been a horrible accident,» said cook. «A man killed.»

«A man killed! Where? How? When?

But Godber's man wasn't going to have his story snatched from under his very nose.

«Know those little cottages just below here, miss?» Know them? Of course she knew them. «Well, there's a young chap living there, name of Scott, a carter. His horse shied at a traction-engine, corner of Hawke Street this morning, and he was thrown out on the back of his head. Killed.»

«Dead!» Laura stared at Godber's man.

«Dead when they picked him up,» said Godber's man with relish. «They were taking the body home as I come up here.» And he said to the cook, «He's left a wife and five little ones.»

«Jose, come here,» Laura caught hold of her sister's sleeve and dragged her through the kitchen to the other side of the green baize

door. There she paused and leaned against it. «Jose!» she said, horrified, «however are we going to stop everything?»

«Stop everything, Laura!» cried Jose in astonishment. «What do you mean?»

«Stop the garden-party, of course.» Why did Jose pretend?

But Jose was still more amazed. «Stop the garden-party? My dear Laura, don't be so absurd. Of course we can't do anything of the kind. Nobody expects us to. Don't be so extravagant.»

«But we can't possibly have a garden-party with a man dead just outside the front gate.»

That really was extravagant, for the little cottages were in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house. A broad road ran between. True, they were far too near. They were the greatest possible eyesore and they had no right to be in that neighbourhood at all. They were little mean dwellings painted a chocolate brown. In the garden patches there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans. The very smoke coming out of their chimneys was poverty-stricken. Little rags and shreds of smoke, so unlike the great silvery plumes that uncurled from the Sheridans' chimneys. Washerwomen lived in the lane and sweeps and a cobbler and a man whose house-front was studded all over with minute bird-cages. Children swarmed. When the Sheridans were little they were forbidden to set foot there because of the revolting language and of what they might catch. But since they were grown up Laura and Laurie on their prowls sometimes walked through. It was disgusting and sordid. They came out with a shudder. But still one must go everywhere; one must see everything. So through they went.

«And just think of what the band would sound like to that poor woman,» said Laura.

«Oh, Laura!» Jose began to be seriously annoyed. «If you're going to stop a band playing every time someone has an accident, you'll lead a

very strenuous life. I'm every bit as sorry about it as you. I feel just as sympathetic.» Her eyes hardened. She looked at her sister just as she used to when they were little and fighting together. «You won't bring a drunken workman back to life by being sentimental,» she said softly.

«Drunk! Who said he was drunk?» Laura turned furiously on Jose. She said just as they had used to say on those occasions, «I'm going straight up to tell mother.»

«Do, dear,» cooed Jose.

«Mother, can I come into your room?» Laura turned the big glass door-knob.

«Of course, child. Why, what's the matter? What's given you such a colour?» And Mrs. Sheridan turned round from her dressing-table. She was trying on a new hat.

«Mother, a man's been killed,» began Laura.

«*Not* in the garden?» interrupted her mother.

«No, no!»

«Oh, what a fright you gave me!» Mrs. Sheridan sighed with relief and took off the big hat and held it on her knees.

«But listen, mother,» said Laura. Breathless, half choking she told the dreadful story. «Of course, we can't have our party, can we?» she pleaded. «The band and everybody arriving. They'd hear us, mother; they're nearly neighbours!»

To Laura's astonishment her mother behaved just like Jose; it was harder to bear because she seemed amused. She refused to take Laura seriously.

«But, my dear child, use your common sense. It's only by accident we've heard of it. If someone had died there normally — and I can't understand how they keep alive in those poky little holes — we should still be having our party, shouldn't we?»

Laura had to say «yes» to that, but she felt it was all wrong. She sat down on her mother's sofa and pinched the cushion frill.

«Mother, isn't it really terribly heartless of us?» she asked.

«Darling!» Mrs. Sheridan got up and came over to her, carrying the hat. Before Laura could stop her she had popped it on. «My child!» said her mother, «the hat is yours. It's made for you. It's much too young for me. I have never seen you look such a picture. Look at yourself!» And she held up her hand-mirror.

«But, mother,» Laura began again. She couldn't look at herself; she turned aside.

This time Mrs. Sheridan lost patience just as Jose had done.

«You are being very absurd, Laura,» she said coldly. «People like that don't expect sacrifices from us. And it's not very sympathetic to spoil everybody's enjoyment as you're doing now.»

«I don't understand,» said Laura, and she walked quickly out of the room into her own bedroom. There, quite by chance, the first thing she saw was this charming girl in the mirror, in her black hat trimmed with gold daisies and a long black velvet ribbon. Never had she imagined she could look like that. Is mother right? she thought. And now she hoped her mother was right. Am I being extravagant? Perhaps it was extravagant. Just for a moment she had another glimpse of that poor woman and those little children and the body being carried into the house. But it all seemed blurred, unreal, like a picture in the newspaper. I'll remember it again after the party's over, she decided. And somehow that seemed quite the best plan.

Lunch was over by half-past one. By half-past two they were all ready for the fray. The green-coated band had arrived and was established in a corner of the tennis-court.

«My dear!» trilled Kitty Maitland, «aren't they too like frogs for words?

You ought to have arranged them round the pond with the conductor in the middle on a leaf.»

Laurie arrived and hailed them on his way to dress. At the sight of him Laura remembered the accident again. She wanted to tell him. If Laurie agreed with the others, then it was bound to be all right. And she followed him into the hall.

«Laurie!»

«Hallo!» He was half-way upstairs, but when he turned round and saw Laura he suddenly purled out his cheeks and goggled his eyes at her. «My word, Laura! You do look stunning,» said Laurie. «What an absolutely topping hat!»

Laura said faintly «Is it?» and smiled up at Laurie and didn't tell him after all.

Soon after that people began coming in streams. The band struck up; the hired waiters ran from the house to the marquee. Wherever you looked there were couples strolling, bending to the flowers, greeting, moving on over the lawn. They were like bright birds that had alighted in the Sheridans' garden for this one afternoon, on their way to — where? Ah, what happiness it is to be with people who all are happy, to press hands, press cheeks, smile into eyes.

«Darling Laura, how well you look!»

«What a becoming hat, child!»

«Laura, you look quite Spanish. I've never seen you look so striking.»

And Laura, glowing, answered softly, «Have you had tea? Won't you have an ice? The passion-fruit ices really are rather special.» She ran to her father and begged him: «Daddy darling, can't the band have something to drink?»

And the perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed.

«Never a more delightful garden-party...» «The greatest success...» «Quite the most... »

Laura helped her mother with the good-byes. They stood side by side in the porch till it was all over.

«All over, all over, thank heaven,» said Mrs. Sheridan. «Round up the others, Laura. Let's go and have some fresh coffee. I'm exhausted. Yes, it's been very successful. But oh, these parties, these parties! Why will you children insist on giving parties!» And they all of them sat down in the deserted marquee.

«Have a sandwich, daddy dear. I wrote the flag.»

«Thanks.» Mr. Sheridan took a bite and the sandwich was gone. He took another. «I suppose you didn't hear of a beastly accident that happened to-day?» he said.

«My dear,» said Mrs. Sheridan, holding up her hand, «we did. It nearly ruined the party. Laura insisted we should put it off.»

«Oh, mother!» Laura didn't want to be teased about it.

«It was a horrible affair all the same,» said Mr. Sheridan. «The chap was married too. Lived just below in the lane, and leaves a wife and half a dozen kiddies, so they say.»

An awkward little silence fell. Mrs. Sheridan fidgeted with her cup. Really, it was very tactless of father....

Suddenly she looked up. There on the table were all those sandwiches, cakes, puffs, all uneaten, all going to be wasted. She had one of her brilliant ideas.

«I know,» she said. «Let's make up a basket. Let's send that poor creature some of this perfectly good food. At any rate, it will be the greatest treat for the children. Don't you agree? And she's sure to have neighbours calling in and so on. What a point to have it all ready prepared Laura!» She jumped up. «Get me the big basket out of the stairs cupboard.»

«But, mother, do you really think it's a good idea?» said Laura.

Again, how curious, she seemed to be different from them all. To take scraps from their party. Would the poor woman really like that?

«Of course! What's the matter with you today? An hour or two ago you were insisting on us being sympathetic.»

Oh well! Laura ran for the basket. It was filled, it was now heaped by her mother.

«Take it yourself, darling,» said she. «Run down just as you are. No, wait, take the arum lilies too. People of that class are so impressed by arum lilies.»

«The stems will ruin her lace frock,» said practical Jose.

So they would. Just in time. «Only the basket, then. And, Laura!» — her mother followed her out of the marquee — «don't on any account —»

«What, mother?»

No, better not put such ideas into the child's head! «Nothing! Run along.»

It was just growing dusky as Laura shut their garden gates. A big dog ran by like a shadow. The road gleamed white, and down below in the hollow the little cottages were in deep shade. How quiet it seemed after the afternoon. Here she was going down the hill to somewhere where a man lay dead, and she couldn't realise it. Why couldn't she? She stopped a minute. And it seemed to her that kisses, voices, tinkling spoons, laughter, the smell of crushed grass were somehow inside her. She had no room for anything else. How strange! She looked up at the pale sky, and all she thought was, «Yes, it was the most successful party.»

Now the broad road was crossed. The lane began, smoky and dark. Women in shawls and men's tweed caps hurried by. Men hung over the palings; the children played in the doorways. A low hum came from

the mean little cottages. In some of them there was a flicker of light, and a shadow, crab-like, moved across the window. Laura bent her head and hurried on. She wished now she had put on a coat. How her frock shone! And the big hat with the velvet streamer — if only it was another hat! Were the people looking at her? They must be. It was a mistake to have come; she knew all along it was a mistake. Should she go back even now?

No, too late. This was the house. It must be. A dark knot of people stood outside. Beside the gate an old, old woman with a crutch sat in a chair, watching. She had her feet on a newspaper. The voices stopped as Laura drew near. The group parted. It was as though she was expected, as though they had known she was coming here.

Laura was terribly nervous. Tossing the velvet ribbon over her shoulder, she said to a woman standing by, «Is this Mrs. Scott's house?» and the woman, smiling queerly, said, «It is, my lass.»

Oh, to be away from this! She actually said, «Help me, God,» as she walked up the tiny path and knocked. To be away from these staring eyes, or to be covered up in anything, one of those women's shawls even. I'll just leave the basket and go, she decided. I shan't even wait for it to be emptied.

Then the door opened. A little woman in black showed in the gloom.

Laura said, «Are you Mrs. Scott?» But to her horror the woman answered, «Walk in, please, miss,» and she was shut in the passage.

«No, said Laura, «I don't want to come in. I only want to leave this basket. Mother sent —»

The little woman in the gloomy passage seemed not to have heard her. «Step this way, please, miss,» she said in an oily voice, and Laura followed her.

She found herself in a wretched little low kitchen, lighted by a smoky lamp. There was a woman sitting before the fire.

«Em,» said the little creature who had let her in. «Em! It's a young lady.» She turned to Laura. She said meaningly, «I'm 'er sister, miss. You'll excuse 'er, won't you?»

«Oh, but of course!» said Laura. «Please, please don't disturb her. I — I only want to leave —»

But at that moment the woman at the fire turned round. Her face, puffed up, red, with swollen eyes and swollen lips, looked terrible. She seemed as though she couldn't understand why Laura was there. What did it mean? Why was this stranger standing in the kitchen with a basket? What was it all about? And the poor face puckered up again.

«All right, my dear,» said the other. «I'll thenk the young lady.»

And again she began, «You'll excuse» her, miss, I'm sure,» and her face swollen too, tried an oily smile.

Laura only wanted to get out, to get away. She was back in the passage. The door opened. She walked straight through into the bedroom, where the dead man was lying.

«You'd like a look at 'im, wouldn't you?» said Em's sister, and she brushed past Laura over to the bed. «Don't be afraid, my lass» — and now her voice sounded fond and sly, and fondly she drew down the sheet — «e looks a picture. There's nothing to show. Come along, my dear.»

Laura came.

There lay a young man, fast asleep — sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy... happy.... All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content.

But all the same you had to cry, and she couldn't go out of the room without saying something to him. Laura gave a loud childish sob.

«Forgive my hat,» she said.

And this time she didn't wait for Em's sister. She found her way out of the door, down the path past all those dark people. At the corner of the lane she met Laurie.

He stepped out of the shadow. «Is that you, Laura?»

«Yes.»

«Mother was getting anxious. Was it all right?»

«Yes, quite, Oh, Laurie!» She took his arm, she pressed up against him.

«I say, you're not crying, are you?» asked her brother.

Laura shook her head. She was.

Laurie put his arm round her shoulder. «Don't cry,» he said in his warm, loving voice, «Was it awful?»

«No,» sobbed Laura. «It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie —» She stopped, she looked at her brother. «Isn't life,» she stammered, «isn't life —» But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood.

«Isn't it, darling?» said Laurie.

ASSIGNMENT:

HERE ARE THE GROUND RULES:

1) Read carefully
2) Use any interpretive strategies you've learned or picked up from analytical manuals or elsewhere
3) Employ no outside sources about the story
4) Write down your results, so there's no fudging. Give the story

careful thought and record your results, then bring them back to class and we'll compare notes. Take as long as you like.

QUESTIONS:

First question: what does the story signify?

What is Mansfield saying in the story? What do you see it as meaning?

Second question: how does it signify?

What elements does Mansfield employ to cause the story to signify whatever it signifies? What elements, in other words, cause it to mean the things you take it to mean?

I'll give you two versions and you can see if they sound familiar.

1) *«What a terrific story! If you have any aspirations to fiction writing, the perfection of this story has to inspire awe and envy. Before the questions, a bit of background. Katherine Mansfield was a writer who came from New Zealand, although she spent her adult years in England. She was married to John Middleton Murry, a writer and critic, was friends with D. H. and Frieda Lawrence (in fact, she was the model, at least in part, for Gudrun in his Women in Love), produced a sizable handful of very lovely and accomplished stories, and died young of tuberculosis. Despite her slim output, there are those who would rank her as one of the unquestioned masters of the short story form. The story printed here appeared in 1922, the year, before she died. It is not autobiographical in any ways that matter for our purposes.*

To have the party or not, that is the question. An element of *indifference is the ultimate overtime. These things happen, how could tm not celebrate? For our main character, her guilt is heightened by the fact that these mourners live down the hill. It is brought to extremes when at the end of the party it is suggested that in an act of goodwill and charity, those below should he given the leftovers. What does this signify? The indifference of the dominant class of people to the suffering of others. Our main character is somewhere in between, might between what is*

expected of her and how she feels. She faces it. She takes the food, the waste of the party, to the widow in mourning, she faces the horrible reality of humanity. Afterward, she seeks the comfort of the only person who could possibly understand the situation, her brother, and finds no answers became there are no answers, just shared perceptions of reality.

Most central to the story is the growing awareness of the main chapter to class differentiation and snobbery.

WHAT DOES THE STORY SIGNIFY?

Mansfield's «The Garden Party» shows the clash between the social classes. More specifically, it shows how people insulate themselves from what lies outside their own narrow view of the world — how to put up Minders (be they with velvet ribbons), if you will.

HOW DOES IT SIGNIFY?

BIRDS AND FLIGHT

Mansfield uses the metaphor of birds and flight as a strategy to show how the Sheridans insulate themselves from the lower classes. Jose is a «butterfly.» Mrs. Sheridan's mice «floats» and Laura must «skim over the lawn, up the path, up the steps» to reach her. They are all perched high on an aerie up a «steep rise» from the cottages below. But Laura is a fledgling. Her mother steps back and encourages her to flit around in her preparations for the party, but Laura's wings aren't quite experienced enough — she «flung her arms over her head, took a deep breath, stretched and let them fall,» then sighed, so that even a workman «smiled down at her». From her vantage on the ground, Laura still has a foot in their lower-class world. They are her «neighbors.» She has not yet separated herself from them. Remote sympathy is fine, but intimate empathy directly conflicts with the Sheridans' manner of living. If Laura is to rise to the level of her family and class, then she is going to need instruction.

Like her siblings before her, she learns from her mother. Mrs. Sheridan teaches Laura how to put on a garden party, hut more to the point, she teaches the strategy to see the world from a loftier — though somewhat myopic — perspective. Like a mother bird teaching her young to fly, Mrs. Sheridan encourages Laura to go so far on her own until it becomes dear that her inexperience requires intervention. When Laura pleads with her mother to camel the party because of the carter's death, Mrs. Sheridan diverts her with a gift of a new hat. Though Laura is reluctant to abandon her base instincts, she does manage a compromise: «I'll remember it again after the party's over.» She chooses to put a little space between her life on the hill and the outside world.

Laura sees her peers, her follow partygoers, as «birds that had alighted in the Sheridans' garden for this one afternoon, on their way to — where?» The answer is left vague. There is a danger Mow at the cottages of the tower-classes; when the Sheridan children were young they «were forbidden to set foot there,» A man down there has a «house-front,.. studded all over with minute bird-cages.» Those cages represent a threat to the way of life of the high-flying birds of the social elite. As long as they remain aloft, they evade the danger.

But it is now time for Laura to try her wings. Mrs. Sheridan pushes her from the nest She tells her to go down to the cottages to give the widow a sympathy basket of their leftovers. Laura must confront her conflict between the worldview that nags at her and the more slivered view of her advantaged upbringing. She faces her conscience. She goes down from the safety of her home, crosses the «broad road» to the cottages, and becomes caged in the house of the dead man. She becomes self-conscious of her appearance, shiny and streaming, something apart from the people who live here. She sees herself through the eyes of the young widow and is confused that the woman does not know why Laura has come. She begins to recognize that her world does not belong here, and the realization frightens her. She wants to flee, but she must ultimately view the dead man. It is while looking at him that she chooses to see,

instead of the reality of the hardship the man's death leaves to his family, an affirmation of her own lifestyle. She reasons that his death has nothing at all to do with «garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks,» and she is thereby lifted from moral obligation. The revelation is «marvelous.» If Laura cannot explain what life is to her brother, 'Isn't life... isn't life — «it is bemuse as Mansfield write, it is of «no matter.» Laura has learned to look at it from a loftier perspective. She needn't pretend to look short-sighted anymore.

2) *«If we express the act of reading in scientific or religious terms (since I'm not sure if this will fall into the realm of physics or metaphysics), all these student readings represent, with varying degrees of specificity and depth, almost clinical analysis of the observable phenomena of the story. This is as it should be. Readers need to deal with the obvious — and not so obvious — material of the story before going anywhere else. The most disastrous reading are those that are wildly inventive and largely independent of the story's factual content, those that go rifling off on a word out of context or a supposed image that is in truth not at all the image presented in the text. What I want to do, on the other hand, is consider the noumenal level of the story, its spiritual or essential level of being. If you don't think such a thing is possible, here we go.*

What I notice first in the text is that word «ideal»; how many times have, you described your weather as ideal? They couldn't have had a more «perfect» day. Those two words may just be hyperbole, but coming in the first two sentences of the story, they feel suggestive. The sky is without a cloud (just so we can't but expect some sort of cloud is coming), and the gardener has been at work since dawn. Later, this perfect afternoon will «ripen» and then «slowly fide,» as a fruit or flower would. By then we will have seen that flowers permeate this story, as befits a garden party. Even the places emptied of daisies are «rosettes.» And the real roses themselves have bloomed «in die hundreds» overnight, at if by magic or, since Mansfield mentions a visitation by archangels, by divin-

ity. This first paragraph is bracketed by the ideal and archangels — not a particularly human environment, is it?

When I see an unreal, idealized setting such as this, I generally want to know who's in charge. No mystery here: everyone defers to Mrs. Sheridan. Whose garden is it? Not the gardener's; he's just a servant doing the bidding of the mistress. And what a garden, with its hundreds of roses, lily lawn, karaka trees with broad leaves and bunches of yellow fruit, lavender, plus trays and trays and trays of canna lilies, of which, Mrs. Sheridan believes, one cannot have coo many. This excess of canna lilies she describes as «enough» for once in her life. Even the guests become part of her garden realm, seeming to be «bright birds» as they stroll the lawn and stoop to-admire the flowers, while her hat, which she passes on to Laura, has «gold daisies.» Clearly she is the queen or goddess of this garden world. Food is the other major element of her realm. She is responsible for food for the party, sandwiches (fifteen different kinds including cream-cheese-and-lemon-curd and egg-and-olive) and cream puffs and passion fruit ices (so we know it is New Zealand and not Newcastle). The final component is children, of which she has four. So a queen overseeing her realm of living plants, food, and progeny. Mrs. Sheridan begins to sound suspiciously like a fertility goddess. Since, however, there are lots of kinds of ferity goddess we need more information.

I'm not done with that hat. It's a black hat with black velvet ribbon and gold daisies, equally incongruous at the patty and at the later visitation, although I'm less impressed by what it is than by whose it is. Mrs. Sheridan has purchased it, but she insists that Laura take it, declaring it «much too young» for herself. Although Laura resists, she does accept the hat and is later captivated by her own «charming» image in the minor. No doubt she does look charming, but part of that is transferral. When a younger character takes on an older character's talisman, she also assumes some of the elder's power. This is true whether it's a father's coat, a mentor's sword, a teacher's pen, or a mother's hat. Because

the hat has come from Mrs. Sheridan, Laura instantly becomes more closely associated than any of her siblings with her mother. This identification is furthered first by Laura's standing beside her mother to help with the good-byes and then by the contents of her charity basket: left-over food from the party and, but for the destruction they would have wrought on her lace frock, arum lilies. This growing identification between Mrs. Sheridan and Laura is significant on a couple of levels, and we'll return to that presently.

Let's look at Laura's trip. The perfect afternoon on the high promontory is ending and «growing dusky as Laura shut [s] their garden gates.» From here on her trip grows progressively darker. The cottages down in the hollow are in «deep shade,» the lane «smoky and dark.» Some of the cottages show a flicker of light, just enough to project shadows on the windows, She wishes she had put on a coat, since her bright frock shines amid the dismal surroundings. Inside the dead man's house itself, she goes down a «gloomy passage» to a kitchen «lighted by a smoky lamp.» When her visit ends, she makes her way past «all those dark people» to a spot where her brother, Laurie, «steps out of the shadow».

There are a couple of other odd features here, For one thing, on her way to the lane, Laura is gratuitously accosted by a large dog «running by like a shadow» Upon getting to the bottom, she crosses the «broad road» to go into the dismal lane, Once in the lane, there's an old, old woman with a crutch sitting with her feet on newspaper, On her way in and out Laura passes individuals and small knots of shadowy figures, but they don't speak to her, and the one by the old woman (she alone speaks) pares to make way for her. When the old woman says the house is indeed that of the dead man, she «smiles queerly.» Although Laura hasn't wanted to see the dead man, when the sheets are folded back, she finds him «wonderful, beautiful, ' echoing her admiration in the morning for the workman who stoops to pick and smell the lavender. Laurie, it turns out, has come to wait at the end of the lane—almost as if he can't enter — because «Mother was getting quite anxious.»*

What just happened here?

For one thing, as my student respondents note, Laura has seen how the other half lives — and dies. One major point of the story is unquestionably the confrontation she has with the lower class and the challenge that meeting throws at her easy class assumptions and prejudices. And then there is the story of a young girl growing up, part of which involves seeing her first dead man, but I think something else is going on here.

I think Laura has just gone to hell. Hades, actually, the classical underworld, the realm of the dead. Not only that, she hasn't gone as Laura Sheridan, but as Persephone, I know what you're thinking: now he's lost his mind. It wouldn't be the first time and probably not the last.

Persephone's mother is Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, fertility and marriage, Agriculture, fertility, marriage. Food, flowers, children, Does that sound like anyone we know? Remember: the guests admiring the flowers at Mrs. Sheridan's garden party go about in couples, as if she has in some way been responsible for their pairing off, marriage is in there. Okay, the long version is in Chapter 19, but here's the lightning-round version; fertility-goddess mother, beautiful daughter, kidnap and seduction by god of underworld, permanent winter, pomegranate-seed monkey business, six-month growing season, happy parties all round. What we get here, of course, is the myth explaining the seasons and agricultural fertility, and what sort of culture would it be that didn't have a myth to cover that? Highly remiss. <...>.

But that's not the only thing this myth covers. There's the business of the young woman arriving at adulthood, and this constitutes a huge step, since it involves facing and comprehending death. The myth involves the tasting of the fruit, as with Eve, and the stories share the initiation into adult knowledge. With Eve, too, the knowledge gained is of our mortality, and while that's not quite the point of the Persephone story, it's sort of unavoidable when she marries the CEO of the land of the dead.

So how does that make Laura into Persephone, you ask? First there's her

mother as Demeter. That one is, as I suggested, pretty obvious, once the flowers and food and children and couples are considered. Moreover, we should recall that they live on this Olympian height, towering geographically and in class terms over the ordinary mortals in the hollow below. In this divine world the summer's day is perfect, ideal, as the world was before the Joss of her daughter plunged Demeter into mourning and outrage. Then there is the trip down the hill and into a self-contained world full of shadows and smoke and darkness. She crosses the broad road as if it were the River Styx, which one has to cross to enter Hades. No entry is possible without two things: one must pass by Cerberus, the three-headed dog who stands guard, and one must have the admission ticket (Acneas's Golden Bough). Oh, and a guide wouldn't hurt, Laura has her confrontation with the dog just outside her garden gate, and her Golden Bough turns: out to be the gold daisies on her hat. As for guides (and no traveler to the underworld should be without one), Dante in the Divine Comedy (1321 A. D.) has the Roman poet Virgil; in Virgil's epic, The Aeneid (19 B. C.), Aeneas has the Cumaean Sibyl as his guide. Laura's Sibyl is that very old woman with the queer smile; her manner is no stranger than that of the Cumaean — version, and the newspaper under her feet suggests the oracles written on leaves in the Sibyl's caw, where, when the visitor entered, winds whipped the leaves around, scrambling the messages, Aeneas is told to only accept the message from her own lips. As for the knot of unspeaking people who make way for Laura, every visitor to the lower world finds that the shadows pay him or her very little mind, the living having nothing to offer those whose living is, done. Admittedly, these elements of the trip to Hades are not native to the Persephone myth, but they have become part and parcel of our understanding of such a trip. Her admiration for the deceased man's form, her identification, with the grieving wife, and her audible sob all suggest a symbolic marriage. That world is dangerous, though; her mother has started to warn her before she sets out, as Demeter warns her daughter against eating anything in some versions of the original. Moreover, Mrs. Sheridan sends Laurie, a latter-day Hermes, to escort Laura back from this world of the dead.

Okay, so why all this business from three or four thousand years ago? That's what you're wondering, right? There are a couple of reasons, it seems to me, or perhaps a couple of major ones out of many possibilities. Remember, as many commentators have said about the Persephone myth, it encompasses the youthful female experience, the archetypal acquisition of knowledge of sexuality and of death. Our entry into adulthood, the myth suggests, depends on our understanding of our sexual natures and of our mortality. These modes of knowledge are part of Laura's day in the story. She admires the workmen, comparing them favorably to the young men who come to Sunday supper, presumably as prospective beaux for one or another of the sisters, and later she finds the dead man beautiful — a response encompassing both sex and death. Her inability at the very end of the story to articulate what life is — as caught in the repeated fragment of speech, «Isn't life»— suggests an involvement with death so strong that she cannot at this moment formulate any statement about life. This pattern of entry into adult life, Mansfield intimates, has been a recognizable part of our culture for thousands of years; of course it has always been there, but the myth embodying the archetype has continued unbroken through Western culture since the very early Greeks. In tapping into this ancient tale of initiation, she invests the story of Laura's initiation with the accumulated power of the prevailing myth. The second reason is perhaps less exalted. When Persephone returns from the underworld, she has in a sense become her mother; in fact, same Greek rituals did not distinguish between mother and daughter. That may be a good thing if your mother is really Demeter, less so if she is Mrs. Sheridan, in wearing her mother's hat and carrying her basket, she also takes on her mother's views. Although Laura struggles against the» unconscious arrogance of her family throughout the story, she cannot finally break away from their Olympian attitudes toward the merely mortal who reside below the hill. That she is relieved to be rescued by Laurie, even though she has found the experience «marvelous,» suggests that her efforts to become her own person have been only partially successful. We must surely recognise our

own incomplete autonomy in hers, for how many of us can deny that there is a great deal of our patents, for good or ill, in us?

What if you don't see all this going on in the story, if you read it simply as a narrative of a young woman making an ill-advised trip on which she learns something about her world, if you don't see Persephone or Eve or any other mythic figures in the imagery? The modernist poet Ezra Pound said that a poem has to work first of all on the level of the reader for whom «a hawk is simply a hawk.» The same goes for stories. An understanding of the story in terms of what literally happens, if the story is as good as this one, is a great starting point. From there, if you consider the pattern of images and allusions, you'll begin to see more going on. Your, conclusions may not resemble mine, but if you're observing carefully and meditating on the possibilities you'll reach valid conclusions of your own that will enrich and deepen your experience of the story.

So what does the story signify, then? Many things. It offers a critique of the class system, a story of initiation into the adult world of sex and death, an amusing examination of family dynamics, and a touching portrait of a child struggling to establish herself as an independent entity in the face of nearly overwhelming parental influence.

What else could we ask of a simple little story?»

[Source: «How to Read Literature Like a Professor» by Thomas C. Foster. P. 265—281]

Analysis
by Natalia Yaroslavtseva **(group 503)**

The extract under consideration is a passage from the story «The Garden-Party» by Katherine Mansfield. K. Mansfield was born in New Zealand. She is a well-known English writer, a master of psychological short stories.

The given portion is basically about preparations for the garden-party

held by well-to-do people, which was a trivial one for this family. The composition of the story can be characterized as strait-narrative presentation as events are given in their chronological order and the story itself is quite absorbing. Presentation is based on dialogue and represented speech.

In the introduction the reader gets the information about the general atmosphere in the garden where preparations take place. The most surprising fact in the description is that «the weather was ideal», which is not common for any piece of literature. «Windless, warm, the sky without a cloud», friendliness among people and other descriptions of the kind prepare the reader for further narration that may not be so ideal. To fix the attention of the reader to the extremely ideal atmosphere the author employed such stylistic devices as personification. For example in such cases as «Little faint winds were playing chase …, spots of sun … playing too». The introduction of colloquial words, such as chap, matey, old girl, dash off etc. emphasizes the friendly atmosphere in the garden. The abandoned use of ellipses such as «Over there; Coming! Can't hear» etc. serves the same purpose as well as makes the text dynamic.

The main characters are introduced mostly through dialogues, which can be described as an individual style of the narrator. Laura is the protagonist of the story. She is the most participating feature in the preparations. The party was a trivial one for the family and other people of the same social status, and to stress the family wealth the author introduced different kinds of snacks together with other attributes of prosperity: e. g. «the flags for the sandwiches; cream-cheese and lemon-curd»; mentioning of lots of lilies and «a small band».

Laura is an adult and serious girl but at the same time easy-going, quite emotional and not at all snobbish in comparison to other characters. If something was out of control it made her feel nervous and she seemed to be frustrated. Thus we can see the change of her mood by the change of the weather after the accident happened near their house. This accident turned out to be the crucial point of the story.

After the accident took place the conflict of the story became vivid. Different points of view on the accident: mother versus daughter, run into. For the background of the conflict the author employed onomatopoeia — a sound imitation of the piano «Pom! Ta-ta-ta. Tee-ta!» etc. — is a vivid example.

The atmosphere in the garden changes greatly and it became clear that in spite of the fact that the weather was ideal life was far from being ideal.

Analysis
by Anastasiya Milyutina **(group 501)**

The story belongs to the pen of New-Zealand born English master of the short stories. Her delicate stories focus upon psychological conflicts and were influences by Anton Chekhov's stories in mane ways. She was born in 1888 & by the time she died in 1923 aged 35 Katherine Mansfield write numbers of short stories: among them are «The Garden Party», «At the Bay», «The Voyage», «The Stranger», «Naughtiers of the late Colonel» and posthumously published collections. The Dove's Nest and Something childish.

The story under interpretation belongs to the genre of narrative prose, in particular, to the form of short story. I think that the story can be divided into 2 parts: the first one introduces the reader all the characters arranging. The Garden Party, and the second one shows the same characters after a murder that happened in the neighboring house. The two scenes mentioned above shows the different attitude to the events. Thus, the 2 parts help to define the message as class distinctions. The scene is set in Mrs. Sheridan house.

The scene is set in countryside. The Sheridan's' house neighbors little poverty stricken cottages. The narration is told in the third person. The

plot consists of an exposition story and climax; so it has an open.

We may specify at least 3 layers of scene here: psychological, social and philosophic.

The first layer appears to be psychological and this is about the protagonist Laura and inner collision.

The exposition starts with the structure description of the weather which is smoothed.

The second layer is social and deals with the everlasting problem of social inequality.

The third layer is philosophic and is shown through Laura's eyes: «life is not perfect, I think.»

The fact is that the weather at the beginning is ideal; the author conveys this idea with the help of semantic images: «ideal», «perfect day», «without a cloud», «the daisy plants have been seemed to shine». In the description of the weather there are simile & repetition in the sentence «Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds…» & «the green bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by archangels.» These stylistic devices are used to exaggerate the perfection of the weather. In the exposition we are presented with the main characters Mrs. Sheridan, Jose & Laura, her daughters, Laurie, her son, her friend Kitty & Mrs. Sheridan's husband.

All the mentioned above characters except Laura are described by the author rather briefly though with the help of accurate phrases. For example, Mrs. Sheridan uttered about her self «treat me as an honored guest» & she looked after herself thoroughly. So the author depictures her as a supercilious & conceited lady.

As for Jose, her daughter is compared with the butterfly who wears a silk petticoat & a kimono jacket.

The reader can come to the conclusion about Laurie. Laura's brother based on his actions such as he squeezed his sister & gave her a gentle

push.» The author reveals that Laura & Laurie are on friendly terms though words: «Dash off to the phone, old girl.»

More than any other character Laura is paid attention to. The author employs a lot of stylistic devices portraying Laura. That's why she is a protagonist. The fact is that when Laura first appears, the author uses inverted sentence. «Away Laura flew..» to attract reader's attention to her personality & what is more the author entrusted with the task to arrange the main thing: the marquee. It's worth mentioning that there is a digression about flowers from NZ & the reader can easily come to the conclusion that Katherine Mansfield compares Laura with these karaka trees: «growing on a desert island, proud solitary, lifting their leaves to the sun. (she is like a flower on a desert island.)

Another thing about Laura. The description of the scene with 4 workers leads us to the idea that she (Laura) didn't feel class distinctions which the author finds «absurd». To exaggerate this such stylistic devices are used:

- *Fell them (class distinctions). «Not a bit, not an atom...» and simile: «She felt just like a work-girl», parallelism, «How nice workmen were! And what a beautiful morning!» «Oh, how extraordinary nice workmen were, she thought...»*

The story itself not just gives the succession of events but also exposes the protagonist character because we see the development or action through Laura's eyes. The point is the arrangement of the party gives Laura a real pleasure «Away she skimmed over the lain, up the path, up the steps, across the veranda and into the porch». But the very moment she comes to know about the murder Laura makes up her mind to «stop every thing». Though everyone finds it absurd. Laura can't imagine the party held. But we can't possibly have a garden-party with a man dead just outside the frost gate».

And Laura's high spirits washes away with the changing settings.

«And perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly petals closed» — an example of repetition contrary to the anaphora employed in the beginning («The house was alive…»).

We are inclined to refer the climax to the scene of Laura's visiting Mrs. Scott's house. It's the highest point of the action because Laura becomes aware of the lifestyle of people of different class and of death. She is not a flower on a desert island any more. Now Laura can compare her with those of poor people. «What did garden-parties and baskets and face frocks meter to him? He was far from all those things».

And again this very passage is an example of implication. The author leads the reader to the idea that no matter what a class a person belongs to there are universal value issues which unite all of us.

Finally we'd like to dwell upon the symbolic meaning of the word hat «Which Mrs. Sheridan gave to Laura at the beginning of the party. I have never seen you look such a picture».

«Forgive my hat» says Laura at the death bed. The hat symbolises the difference between classes.

Frankly speaking the end of the story is open and everyone can interpret it either philosophically or socially.

COMMENTARY

III. Interpretation Samples

3.1. Amy Tan. Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds

Amy Tan was born in Oakland, California, in 1952, two and a half years after her parents immigrated to the United States. Though her parents anticipated that she would become a neurosurgeon by trade and a concert pianist by hobby, she instead became a consultant to programs for disabled children, and later a free-lance writer. Amy Tan's brilliant fiction describes the morass of fierce love and misunderstanding which lies between the two generations: the characters's stories unravel the intricacies of combining a Chinese heritage with American circumstances and tell of the relationships between mothers and daughters that both divide and unite us.

My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get a good retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous.

«Of course you can be prodigy, too,» my mother told me when I was nine. «You can be best anything.»

America was where all my mother's hope lay. She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China; her mother and father, her family home, her first husband, and two daughters, twin baby girls. But she never looked back with regret. There were so many ways for things to get better.

We didn't immediately pick the right kind of prodigy. At first my

mother thought I could be a Chinese Shirley Temple. We'd watch Shirley's old movies on TV as though they were training films. My mother would poke my arm and say, «Ni kan» — You watch. And I would see Shirley tapping her feet, or singing a sailor song, or pursing her lips into a very round O while saying, «Oh my goodness.» «Ni kan,» said my mother as Shirley's eyes flooded with tears. «You already know how. Don't need talent for crying!»

Soon after my mother got this idea about Shirley Temple, she took me to a beauty training school in the Mission district and put me in me hands of a student who could barely hold the scissors without shaking. Instead of getting big fat curls, I emerged with an uneven mass of crinkly black fuzz. My mother dragged me off to the bathroom and tried to wet down my hair. «You look like Negro Chinese,» she lamented, as if I had done this on purpose.

The instructor of the beauty training school had to lop off these soggy clumps to make my hair even again. «Peter Pan is very popular these days,» the instructor assured my mother. I now had hair the length of a boy's, with straight-across bangs that hung as a slant, two inches above my eyebrows. I liked the haircut and it made me actually look forward to my future fame.

In fact, in the beginning, I was just as excited as my mother, maybe even more so. I pictured this prodigy part of me as many different images, trying each one on for size. I was a dainty ballerina girl standing by the curtains, waiting to hear the right music that would send me floating on my tiptoes. I was like the Christ child lifted out of the straw manger, crying with holy indignity, I was Cinderella stepping from her pumpkin carriage with sparkly cartoon music filling the air.

In all of my imaginings, I was filled with a sense that I would soon become *perfect*. My mother and father would adore me. I would be beyond reproach. I would never feel the need to sulk for anything.

Every night after dinner, my mother and I would sit at the Formica

kitchen table. She would present new tests, taking her examples from stories of amazing children she had read in Ripley's *Believe It or Not* or *Good Housekeeping, Reader's Digest,* and a dozen other magazines from people whose houses she cleaned. And since she cleaned many houses each week, we had a great assortment. She would look through them all, searching for stories about remarkable children.

The first night she brought out a story about a three-year-old boy who knew the capitals of all the states and even most of the European countries. A teacher was quoted as saying the little boy could also pronounce the names of the foreign cities correctly.

«What's the capital of Finland?» my mother asked me, looking at the magazine story.

All I knew was the capital of California, because Sacramento was the name of the street we lived on in Chinatown, «Nairobi!» I guessed, saying the most foreign word I could think of. She checked to see if that was possibly one way to pronounce «Helsinki» before showing me the answer.

The tests got harder — multiplying numbers in my head, finding the queen of hearts in a deck of cards, trying to stand on my head without using my hands, predicting the daily temperatures in Los Angeles, New York, and London.

One night 1 had to look at a page from the Bible for three minutes and then report everything I could remember. «Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance and... that's all I remember, Ma,» I said.

And after seeing my mother's disappointed face once again, something inside of me began to die. I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations. Before going to bed that night, I looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink and when I saw only my face staring back — and that it would always be this ordinary face — I began to cry. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high-pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror.

And then I saw what seemed to be the prodigy side of me — because I

had never seen that face before. I looked at my reflection, blinking so I could see more clearly. The girl staring back at me was angry, powerful. This girl and I were the same. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts, or rather thoughts filled with lots of wonts. I won't. Let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not.

So now on nights when my mother presented her tests, I performed listlessly, my head propped on one arm. I pretended to be bored. And I was. At last she was beginning to give up hope.

Two or three months had gone by without any mention of my being a prodigy again. And then one day my mother was watching The Ed Sullivan Show on TV. The TV was old and the sound kept shorting out. Every time my mother got halfway up from the sofa to adjust the set, the sound would go back on and Ed would be talking. As soon as she sat down. Ed would go silent again. She got up, the TV broke into loud piano music. «Ni kan,» my mother said, calling me over with hurried hand gestures, «Look here.»

I could see why my mother was fascinated by the music. It was being pounded out by a little Chinese girl, about nine years old, with a Peter Pan haircut. The girl had the sauciness of a Shirley Temple. She was proudly modest like a proper Chinese child. And she also did this fancy sweep of a curtsy, so that the fluffy skirt of her white dress cascaded slowly to the floor like the petals of a large carnation.

In spite of these warning signs, I wasn't worried. Our family had no piano and we couldn't afford to buy one, let alone reams of sheet music and piano lessons.

But three days after watching *The Ed Sullivan Show,* my mother told me what my schedule would be for piano lessons and piano practice. She had talked to Mr. Chong, who lived on the first floor of our apartment building.

Chong was a retired piano teacher and my mother traded housecleaning services for weekly lessons and a piano for me to practice on every day, two hours a day, from four until six.

When my mother told me this, I felt as though I had been sent to hell. I whined and then kicked my foot a little when I couldn't stand it anymore.

«Why don't you like me the way I am? I'm not a genius! I can't play the piano. And even if I could, I wouldn't go on TV if you paid me a million dollars!» I cried.

My mother slapped me. «Who ask you be genius?» she shouted. «Only ask you be your best. For you sake. You think I want you be genius? Hnnh! What for! Who ask you!»

«So ungrateful,» I heard her mutter in Chinese. «If she had as much talent as she has temper, she would be famous now.»

Mr. Chong, whom I secretly nicknamed Old Chong, was very strange, always tapping his lingers to the silent music of an invisible orchestra. He looked ancient in my eyes. He had lost most of the hair on top of his head and he wore thick glasses and had eyes that always looked tired and sleepy. But he must nave been younger than I thought, since he lived with his mother and was not yet married.

I soon found out why Old Chong had retired from teaching piano. He was deaf. «Like Beethoven!» he shouted to me. «We're both listening only in our head!» And he would start to conduct his frantic silent sonatas.

Our lessons went like this. He would open the book and point to different things, explaining their purpose: «Key! Treble! Bass! No sharps or flats! So this is C major! Listen now and play after me!»

And then he would play the C scale a few times, a simple chord, and then, as if inspired by an old, unreachable itch, he gradually added more notes and running trills and a pounding bass until the music was really something quite grand.

I would play after him, the simple scale, the simple chord, and then I just played some nonsense that sounded like a cat running up and down on top of garbage cans. Old Chong smiled and applauded and

then said, «Very good! But now you must learn to keep time!»

That was how I also learned I could he lazy and get away with mistakes, lots or mistakes. If I hit the wrong notes because I hadn't practiced enough, I never corrected myself, I just kept playing in rhythm. And Old Chong kept conducting his own private reverie.

So maybe I never really gave myself a fair chance. I did pick up the basics pretty quickly, and I might have become a good pianist at that young age. But I was so determined not to try, not to he anybody different that I learned to play only the most ear-splitting preludes, the most discordant hymns.

One day Old Chong and my mother conspired to have me play in a talent show which would be held in the church hall. By then, my parents had saved up enough to buy me a secondhand piano with a scarred bench. It was the show-piece of our living room.

For the talent show, I was to play a piece called «Pleading Child» from Schumann's Scenes from Childhood. It was a simple, moody piece that sounded more difficult than it was. I was supposed to memorize the whole thing, playing the repeat parts twice to make the piece sound longer. But I dawdled over it, playing a few bars and then cheating, looking up to see what notes followed. I never really listened to what I was playing. I daydreamed about being somewhere else, about being someone else.

The part I liked to practice best was the fancy curtsy: right foot out, touch the rose on the carpet with a pointed foot, sweep to the side, left leg bends, look up and smile.

My parents invited all the couples from the Joy Luck Club to witness my debut. The first two rows were filled with children both younger and older than I was. The littlest ones got to go first. They recited simple nursery rhymes, squawked out tunes on miniature violins, twirled Hula Hoops, pranced in pink ballet tutus, and when they bowed or curtsied, the audience would sigh in unison, «Awww,» and then clap enthusiastically.

When my turn came, I was very confident. I remember my childish excitement. It was as if I knew, without a doubt, that the prodigy side of me really did exist, I had no fear whatsoever, no nervousness. I remember thinking to myself. This is it! This is it! I looked out over the audience, at my mother's blank face, my father's yawn... I had on a white dress layered with sheets of lace, and a pink bow in my Peter Pan haircut. As I sat down I envisioned people jumping to their feet and Ed Sullivan rushing up to introduce me to everyone on TV.

And I started to play. It was so beautiful. I was so caught up in how lovely I looked that at first I didn't worry how I would sound. So it was a surprise to me when I hit the first wrong note and I realized something didn't sound quite right. And then I hit another and another followed that. A chill started at the top of my head and began to trickle down. Yet I couldn't stop playing, as though my hands were bewitched. I kept thinking my fingers would adjust themselves hack, like a train switching to the right track. I played this strange jumble through two repeats, the sour notes staying with me all the way to the end.

When I stood up, I discovered my legs were snaking. Maybe I had just been nervous and the audience, like Old Chong, had seen me go through the right motions and had not heard anything wrong at all. I swept my right foot out, went down on my knee, looked up and smiled. The room was quiet, except for Old Chong, who was beaming and shouting, «Bravo! Bravo! Well done!» But I saw my mother's face, her stricken face. The audience clapped weakly, and as I walked back to my chair, my whole face quivering so I tried not to cry, I heard a little boy whisper loudly to his mother, «That was awful,» the mother whispered back, «Well, she certainly tried.»

And now 1 realized how many people were in the audience, the whole world it seemed. I was aware of eyes burning into my hack. I felt the shame of my mother and father as they sat stiffly throughout the rest of the show.

We could have escaped during intermission. Pride and strange sense of honor must have anchored my parents to their chairs. And so we watched it all: the eighteen-year-old boy with a fake mustache who did a magic show and juggled flaming hoops while riding a unicycle. The breasted girl with white makeup who sang from *Madam Butterfly* and got honorable mention. And the eleven-year-old boy who won first prize playing a tricky song that sounded like a busy bee.

After the show, the Hsus, the Jongs, and the St. Clairs from the Joy Luck Club came up to my mother and father.

«Lots of talented kids,» Auntie Lindo said vaguely, smiling broadly.

«That was somethin' else, «said my father, and I wondered if he was referring to me in humorous way, or whether he even remembered what I had done.

But my mother's expression was what devastated me: a quiet, blank look that said she had lost everything. I felt the same way.

When we got on the bus to go home, my father was humming the busy-bee tune and my mother was silent. I kept thinking she wanted to wait until we got home before shouting at me. But when my father unlocked the door to our apartment, my mother walked in and then went back, into the bedroom. No accusations. No blame. And in a way, I felt disappointed. I had been waiting for her to start shouting, so I could shout back and cry and blame her for all my misery.

I assumed my talent-show fiasco meant I never had to play the piano again. But two days later, after school, my mother came out of the kitchen and saw me watching TV.

«Four clock,» she reminded me as if it were any other day. I was stunned, as though she were asking me to go through the talent-show torture again. I wedged myself more tightly in front of the TV.

«Turn off TV,» she called from the kitchen five minutes later.

I didn't budge. And then I decided. I didn't have to do what my

mother said anymore. I wasn't her slave. This wasn't China. I had listened to her before and look what happened. She was the stupid one.

She came out from the kitchen and stood in the arched entryway of the living room. «Four clock,» she said once again, louder.

«I'm not going to play anymore,» I said nonchalantly, «Why should I? I'm not a genius.»

She walked over and stood in front of the TV. I saw her chest was heaving up and down in an angry way.

«No!» I said, and I now felt stronger, as if my true self had finally emerged. So this was what had been inside me all along.

«No! I won't!» I screamed.

She yanked me by the arm, pulled me off the floor, snapped off the TV. She was frighteningly strong, half pulling, half carrying me toward the piano as I kicked the throw rugs under my feet. She lifted me up and onto the hard bench. I was sobbing by now, looking at her bitterly. Her chest was heaving even more and her mouth was open, smiling crazily as if she were pleased I was crying.

«You want me to be someone that I'm not!» I sobbed. «I'll never be the kind of daughter you want me to be!»

«Only two kinds of daughters» she shouted in Chinese. «Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter!»

«Then I wish I wasn't your daughter. I wish you weren't my mother, «I shouted. As I said these things I got scared. I felt like worms and toads and slimy things were crawling out of my chest, but it also felt good, as if this awful side of me had surfaced, at last.

«Too late change this,» said my mother shrilly.

And I could sense her anger rising to its breaking point. I wanted to see it spill over. And that's when I remembered the babies she had lost

in China, the ones we never talked about. «Then I wish I'd never been born!» I shouted, «I wish I were dead! Like them.»

It was as if I had said the magic words. Alakazam! — and her face went blank, her mouth closed, her arms went slack, and she backed out or the room, stunned, as it she were blowing away like a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless.

* * *

It was not the only disappointment my mother felt in me. In the years that followed, I failed her so many times, each time asserting my own will, my right to fall short of expectations. I didn't get straight As. I didn't become come class president. I didn't get into Stanford. I dropped out of college.

For unlike my mother, I did not believe I could be anything I wanted to be. I could only be me.

And for all those years, we never talked about the disaster at the recital or my terrible accusations afterward at the piano bench. All that remained unchecked, like a betrayal that was now unspeakable. So I never found a way to ask her why she had hoped for something so large that failure was inevitable.

And even worse, I never asked her what frightened me the most: Why had she given up hope?

For after our struggle at the piano, she never mentioned my playing again. The lessons stopped. The lid to the piano was closed, shutting out the dust, my misery, and her dreams.

So she surprised me. A few years ago, she offered to give me the piano, for my thirtieth birthday, I had not played in all those years. I saw the offer as a sign of forgiveness, a tremendous burden removed.

«Are you sure?» I asked shyly. «I mean, won't you and Dad miss it?»

«No, this your piano, «she said firmly. «Always your piano. You only one can play. »

«Well, I probably can't play anymore,» I said. «It's been years.»

«You pick up fast,» said my mother, as if she knew this was certain. «You have natural talent. You could been genius if you want to.»

«No I couldn't.»

«You just not trying,» said my mother. And she was neither angry nor sad. She said it as if to announce a fact that could never be disproved. «Take it,» she said.

But I didn't at first. It was enough that she had offered it to me. And after that, every time I saw it in my parents' living room, standing in front of the bay windows, it made me feel proud, as if it were a shiny trophy I had won back.

Last week I sent a tuner over to my parents' apartment and had the piano reconditioned, for purely sentimental reasons. My mother had died a few months before and I had been getting things in order for my father, a little bit at a time.

After I had the piano tuned, I opened the lid and touched file keys. It sounded even richer than I remembered. Really, it was a very good piano. Inside the bench were the same exercise notes with handwritten scales, the same second-hand music books with their covers held together with yellow tape.

I opened up the Schumann book to the dark little piece I had played at the recital. It was on the left-hand side of the page, «Pleading Child.» It looked more difficult than I remembered. I played a few bars, surprised at how easily the notes came back to me.

And for the first time, or so it seemed, I noticed the piece on the right-hand side. It was called «Perfectly Contented.» I tried to play this one as well. It had a lighter melody but the same flowing rhythm and turned out to be quite easy. «Pleading Child» was shorter but slower; «Perfectly Contented» was longer but faster. And after I played them

both a few times, I realized they were two halves of the same song. (p. 141—155)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Look up the entries in the dictionaries or encyclopedias for cultural associations (Ed Sullivan Show, Good Housekeeping, Peter Pan, Shirley Temple, Stanford).
2. Explain the meaning of the following vocabulary units and how they relate to the main ideas of the text: prodigy, obedient, queen of hearts, to mesmerize, to brag, snotty, honorable mention, to budge, nonchalant, to fall short of expectations.
3. Grammar: find different types of conditional sentences in the text; comment on their meaning and justify their usage. Do long or short sentences prevail in the text? Why? What is the effect achieved?
4. Discussion questions: What kind of girl did Jing-Mei Woo's mother want her daughter to be? How did Jing-Mei Woo feel about herself? Did her attitude change as she grew from a child to an adult? What significance does the piano have in the context of the story? How does the piano symbolize the conflict between Jing-Mei Woo and her mother? How does the piano symbolize the conflict within the mother herself? How does the piano symbolize the resolution of these conflicts? Explain the meaning of the last two paragraphs of the story. Linguistic analysis: find unusual comparisons, similes and metaphors in the text. Comment on the effect produced.
5. Linguistic analysis: find unusual comparisons, similes and metaphors in the text; comment on the effect produced. Comment on the following sentences and explain how they relate to the main ideas of the text: «I won't be what I'm not.» «I could only be me.» «She had hoped for something so large that failure was in-

evitable.» «The lid to the piano was closed, shutting out the dust, my misery, and her dream.» Give critical evaluation of the story.

Analysis
by Natalia Sandalova **(group 503)**

The story under analysis belongs to the pen of Amy Tan, born February 19,1952, an American writer whose works explore mother-daughter relationships and what it means to grow up as a first Asian American generation. Her stories are autobiographic, as there she reveals the mother-daughter conflict.

The text under consideration is an excerpt from the novel «The Joy Luck Club» by Amy Tan. I find the story rather absorbing and complex, highlighting the controversial and crucial problem of self-identification and search of one's «I» in this world. The story is the first person narration, presented by the protagonist — a Chinese girl, Jing-Mei Woo by name, whose family moved to America. The general tone of the story is rather controversial, it contains several sarcastic notes. The scene is set in the house, where Jing-Mei Woo and her family lived. The story is not a complete one, it doesn't possess an ending, but it has all the other elements: it has an introduction, an entanglement, and a climax. The title is symbolic, and it reveals the general conflict of the story — the contradiction between the two kinds of the girl, the two kinds of her character — the one she is and the one she can be, that is an ordinary side of her, and a prodigy side. The word «prodigy» is repeated several times in the text to indicate the kind of girl she can become. The whole story is built on contrast, and there are several elements used to support the idea. The most powerful episode, supporting this idea is the episode in the bathroom, where the girl sees her reflection in the mirror. It is common knowledge that the mirror has always been the symbol of another world, so to say, the representation of another realm. So in this scene the girl faces the

two representations of her self, her «two kinds». First she sees an ordinary kind of her individuality, and it makes her sad to understand that she is nothing special; she calls herself «such a sad and ugly girl». But then she saw the second kind of her inner world, the «prodigy side of her», as she calls it. And she commented that it was the first time when she saw that prodigy side. And that was the confrontation of those two sides, and the girl sees that she couldn't accept that prodigy side of her: «the girl staring at me was angry, powerful. This girl and I were the same». At that moment the protagonist has new thoughts. She says that she won't be that prodigy. The word «won't» is repeated several times in this passage to support the conviction of the girl. «I had new thoughts, willful thoughts or rather thought filled with lots of «won'ts.» I won't let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not.» I think that this episode can be considered the climax of the story, as the scene emphasizes the confrontation of the two kinds of the girl.

The story in general can be subdivided into several parts. The first part is connected with the introduction of the conflict, the tests that the girl had to pass and the Shirley Temple series, that were used like a piece of educational program. It can be entitled «How to bring up a prodigy». In this portion there are several instances of parallelism. The first parallel construction was used by the author describing how to be a success in America» «you could be anything you wanted to be in America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get a good retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous.» So parallel constructions and anaphora show numerous opportunities that were at a person's disposal, and probably these devices were used to show the endless number of times that the protagonist's mother repeated those challenges. The second parallel construction was employed when talking about her mother's past life, thus showing the contrast between her life in China and America: «she had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China; her mother, her family home, her first husband». In this

part we also face several allusions, such as Peter Pan, Cinderella and even the Christ child. These allusions show how the girl «pictured the prodigy part of her as many different images, trying each one on for size». And the girl believed that she can be someone else, she can be a prodigy. And to support the idea, the author again uses parallelism and repetition «in all my imaginings I was filled with a sense that I would soon become perfect. My mother and father would adore me. I would be beyond reproach. I would never feel the need to sulk for anything.» But the use of «would instead of will» shows that it was just hope, not determination, only dreams, and the girl inside didn't have confidence to consider that as her real future. Already then she started to understand that the perfect side of her isn't the thing she aimed at. She mentioned that she «hated the tests, raised hopes and failed expectations», meaning that she wanted everyone to believe in her as she is, to love her as she is. And she didn't want to disappoint anyone by failing to be someone else. And after that there comes the crucial episode with the mirror that gives the girl the understanding, the answer to all her questions — she wanted just to be herself, not trying to be someone else. So after this meaningful episode the girl starts to look at everything from another angle.

The second part of the text deals with the Ed Sullivan Show and the piano lessons. Here we see the allusion to the famous TV show, enabling people with talents to reveal the talent to the audience. Here we see another attempt of mother to make her daughter a prodigy. She asks a man, Old Chong, to teach her daughter how to play the piano. In this passage there are several instances of irony and even sarcasm. The first sarcastic element is built up with the help of a paradox — the teacher of music is deaf. So he can't hear if his student is making progress or not. The girl calls his lessons «frantic silent sonatas», using a very unusual comparison. The girl wasn't interested in that at all, she didn't care about making mistakes, and she made lots of them, the author deliberately uses repetition of the word «mistakes» to show this. The girl was «determined not to try to, not to be anybody different.» She was fed up

with those «ear-splitting preludes» and «most discordant hymns». She «daydreamed about being somewhere else and being someone else».

The third part of the story is connected with the TV show of talents itself and the outcome of it. The author employs irony to show the beginning of the show and the children who participated in it. «They recited simple nursery rhymes, squawked out tunes on miniature violins, twirled Hula Hoops, pranced in pink ballet tutus, and then bowed or curtsied, the audience would sigh in unison «awwww» and then clap enthusiastically». Here we see the ironic contradiction, because the girl really was bored by all that, she thought that all artificial. And she was excited about her own performance. She wasn't nervous, but she saw her «mother's blank face» and her «father's yawn». I think it really gave her food for thought, as if they didn't believe in her. Her first performance failed, it was a «talent show fiasco». She probably wanted to prove her mother that she can really be a prodigy, but she failed to do it. At the same time she was afraid of punishment, she was sad that she didn't succeed, but still she was waiting for at least displeased reaction from her mother. However there was no reaction, «no accusations. No blame». So she decided that it was useless to find prodigy in her, and once again it ended up in a conflict with her mother and the use of short and exclamatory sentences emphasize the opinion of the mother: «Only two kinds of daughters. Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter.» The girl was so much shocked by the phrase, that she felt «like worms and toads and slimy things were crawling out of her chest, but it also felt good, as if the awful side of her had surfaced at last». The author used this bright metaphor to show the inner state of the daughter, being both frightened by her impertinence and feeling triumph because of liberating her feelings. She said that she wished to be not born at all, and that fact did much pain to her mother is reflected in the choice of lexical units and metaphor, comparing the mother with the small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless.

The last part of this extract is devoted to the period of the girl's maturity. On the road to adolescence she «failed so many times». Here again the author uses parallelism and anaphora to disclose the great number of her failures «I didn't get straight As. I didn't become class president. I didn't get into Stanford. I dropped out of college.» And the reason for that was that she «unlike her mother, didn't believe she could be anything she wanted to be.» Her parents decided to give her the piano as a gift for her 30th birthday, but she at first refused, because that chapter of her life was closed forever. The author uses zeugma to show it «the lid to the piano was closed, shutting out the dust, my misery and her dreams.» Here the piano is a symbol of her life, as if she was like this piano, everyone played with her life, like a pianist plays the piano. And the piano is the symbol of Jing-Mei Woo's life, of her lost hopes and broken dreams.

The last three paragraphs of the text represent a very crucial moment. The episode is built on the contrast, the material representation of which are the two pages of the Schumann's book. Jing-Mei Woo decided to play the piece that she had played at the recital. On the left hand side there was a piece called «Pleading child.» This piece symbolized the beginning of her life, her past. It symbolized the girl she had been — a lonely child, asking and begging for understanding and for her own opinion to be taken into consideration. The piece is characterized by the author as «shorter and slower» than the second one, this is again a characterization of the girl's life as a child. And the second part of the piece is called «Perfectly contented». I think that this part symbolizes her present and future life, as she finally had found her own way. But I assume that there is bitter irony here, as according to the general tone of the story, the girl, having become a grown up, still feels that there is something wrong in her life, as if she missed some part of it, and this part was «longer but faster». To emphasize the importance of these words the author uses graphic expressive means, i. e. capitalized letters. The last phrase of the extract is very important for the whole narration as the

main character comes to understand that this song is connected with her life as if symbolizing her whole life. Those two parts were different, but they were «two halves of the same song» like these episodes were the two parts of her life.

I think that in general the tone of the story is depressing. The author succeeds in showing the two sides of the conflict, the two sides of the generation gap. And a reader can understand that really the right party can't be found because both parties have their own truths. The girl wants to be herself, and she wants her parents to love her as she is. But the mother can be understood as well, because she loves her daughter and wants a better fate for her than she had had for herself. She wants the girl to be successful, that's why she is so much persistent in her demands and standards. But the tragedy is that both parties are to be blamed for obstinacy. The mother is obstinate in her blindness to the child's real desires and the girl is blind to the mother's love.

Analysis
by Oksana Loubyagina **(group 505)**

The story under interpretation is written by Amy Tan, an American writer whose works describe mother-daughter relationships and how they are viewed upon by the first generation of Asian Americans. Amy Tan received a master's degree in linguistics at San Jose State University. She worked as a children's speech therapist. When a teenager Tan pass over many conflicts with her mother. Tan said: «I think books were my salvation, they saved me from being miserable.» This chapter under interpretation is a piece of her novel entitled «Two kinds». This story is very interesting and complex; here we face crucial problems of mother-daughter relationships, the problem of finding one's self, one's place in the world, one's destiny and one's vocation.

The story is told in the first person, the narrator is a girl named Ni kan, a

Chinese girl, who is a representative of the first grow up generation of Asian American. The general tone of the story is rather controversial, it contains several sarcastic notes. The story is not a complete one, it doesn't have an ending, but has all the other elements: an introduction, an entanglement, a climax. The title is very symbolic, it helps to reveal the main conflict of the story — the collision between two kinds of Ni kan, the two sides of her personality, the one she is (the ordinary, everyday Ni kan) and the one she can be (the prodigy and imaginary Ni kan). The word 'prodigy» is repeated several times in this text to perform the kind of a person she can be, in fact her mother wants her to become.

The whole story is built on the contrast, and there are several episodes supporting this idea. The most demonstrative one is the moment when Ni kan sees her reflection in the bathroom mirror. As is known, the mirror is able to show another different reality. So in this scene the girl faces two self-representations, her «2 kinds». At first she sees the ordinary side of her, and she understands that she is nothing special, she is just 'such a sad and ugly girl'. But then, for the first time, she sees the inner prodigy world of her. And this was the vivid clash of those two sides, and she understands that she doesn't accept being a prodigy: «the girl staring at me was angry, powerful. This girl and I were the same». At that very moment some new thoughts come to her, and one of them is that she won't be that prodigy. This word «won't» is repeated several times, as if she tries to convict herself in her decision «I had new thoughts, willful thoughts or rather thoughts filled with lots of won'ts. I won't let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not». This episode can be called the climax of the story, which generally can be subdivided into parts.

The first part «nurturing a prodigy» represents the introduction of the conflict, and there appeared an «educational part»: the tests that Ni kan had to pass and Shirley Temple series. In this passage we find several examples of parallelism. The first construction is to describe how to be a success in America: «you could be anything you wanted to be in

America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get a good retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous.» Parallel constructions and anaphora were used to show the endless chances and opportunities that every person has in America and the endless number of times Ni kan's mother talked about these things. The second construction was used in relation to her mother's past, showing the contrast between her life in China and current life in America. «She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China; her mother, her family home, her first husband». Here we also find some allusions, like Cinderella, Peter Pan, and Christ Child. They were used to stress the fairytaleness of American life and how the girl «pictured the prodigy part of her as many different images, trying each one for size». And Ni kan begins to believe, that she can be someone else, she can be a real prodigy. And to support this idea the author again uses parallelism and repetition «in all my imaginings I was filled with a sense that I would soon become perfect. My mother and other would adore me. I would be beyond reproach. I would never feel the need to sulk for anything». The use of «would» instead of «will» clearly shows that this perfect side of Ni kan isn't the things she aims at and it wasn't her burning desire to achieve this kind of future, it was just vague dream and weak hope, that she will manage to change herself. She «hates the tests, raised hopes and failed expectations», meaning that she doesn't want to give these ungrounded hopes and pretend to be someone else to make people love her and believe in her. She doesn't want to disappoint anyone, especially her mother, by failing to become a prodigy. And the thing that helps her to realize this fact is her reflection in the mirror. It gives her the understanding and the answer to all her questions: she wants to be herself, as she is, and not to pretend and try to become someone else, some stranger. After this moment she begins to look at everything with her own eyes and from her own point of view.

In the second part of this story we deal with the piano lessons and Ed

Sullivan Show. By these things Ni kan's mother again tries to make her daughter a prodigy. She asks a man, Old Chong, to teach her daughter to play the piano. Here we find several examples of sarcasm and irony. The first sarcastic element is built with the help of paradox — the teacher of music is deaf. So he is not able to hear and evaluate his student's success or failure. Ni kan isn't interested in these lessons at all, she calls her lessons «frantic silent sonatas». She doesn't care about making mistakes, so she makes lots of them, and to prove it the author uses repetition of the word «mistake». The girl was «determined not to try, not to be anybody different». She is fed up with those «ear-splitting preludes» and «most discordant hymns». She «daydreams about being somewhere else and being someone else».

The third part tells us about the TV show of talents itself and the results of it. To describe the show and its children-participants the author uses irony:» they recite simple nursery rhymes, squawked out tunes on miniature violins, twirled Hula Hoops, pranced in pink ballet tutus, and then bowed or curtsied, the audience would sigh in unison «awwww» and then clap enthusiastically». Here we see the ironic contradiction, because the girl is bored by all that, she thinks that all artificial. She isn't nervous about her own performance, but she is excited as she sees her «mother's blank face» and «father's yawn». And at that moment she gets an impression that her parents don't believe in her. Her first performance turns out to be a great failure; it's a «talent show fiasco». The only reason for her participation is Ni kan's desire to prove her mother that she can be a prodigy, that she is better than everyone used to think about her. She understands that she really let her mother down, so she expects some punishment and is afraid of it. She is ready for the most awful reaction from her mother, but there is none of it, «no accusations, no blame». And she finds only one way out: she agrees that it is useless to try to find prodigy in her. It again leads to the mother-daughter conflict, to show the position of mother in it the author uses the contrast «only two kinds of daughters. Those who are obedient and those who

follow their own mind. Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter.»

Ni kan was so impressed and shocked by this phrase, that she feels «like worms and toads and slimy things were crawling out of her chest, but it also felt good, as if the awful side of her had surfaced at last». It is the striking moment: both women are on the verge, Ni kan being half frightened of her new strength and happy because at last she expresses her feelings and thoughts freely; and she is also able to tell her mother the most awful words a child can tell his parent — not to be born at all. It causes so much pain to her mother, that author compares her with the «small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless».

The period of girl's development and growing up is shown in the last part of the chapter. During the adolescence she «failed so many times». Here again we find parallelism and anaphora, expressing the endless number of such failures and lost opportunities 'I didn't get straight As. I didn't become class president. I didn't get into Stanford. I dropped out of my college». And all these happens just because she «unlike my mother, didn't believe I could be anything I wanted to be». Her parents present her the piano for the 30th birthday, but she at first refuses to accept it, because it is a bright reminder of her former failures and hopes, and there is no way back to change the things that have been done already. The author uses zeugma to stress it «the lid to the piano was closed, shutting out the dust, my misery and her dreams».

The author succeeds in showing the two-side conflict, and it's not easy for us to choose who we'll back in it. It's a generation gap tragedy. Parents are not able to see and understand their child's desires and inner world. A child is not able to understand his parents' persistence in changing him for the «best».

3.2. URSULA LE GUIN. THE ONES WHO WALK AWAY FROM OMELAS

Ursula Le Guin (b. 1929) is the daughter of Theodora Kweber, a writer, and Alfred Louis Kroeber, a pioneering anthropologist at the University of California at Berkeley. From her family background Le Guin acquired a double orientation, humanistic and scientific, that shows in all her writing. She was educated at Radcliffe College and Columbia University, where she completed a Master's thesis in medieval romance literature.

Although Le Guin's earliest work primarily attracted a devoted audience of science-fiction readers, her later work — especially «The Left Hand of Darkness» — has wider appeal. In that novel she explored the theme of androgyny on the planet Winter (Gethen), where inhabitants may adopt alternately male and female roles. Le Guin insists on Aristotle's definition of Homo sapiens as social animals, and she shows how difficult it is to think of our fellow humans as people, rather than as men and women.

Le Guin brings to the writing of fantasy fiction a wealth of literary scholarship, crediting Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, and Virginia Woolf (among others) as her primary influences. Most of her stories, like «The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,» are about reciprocal relationships, illustrating the sort of golden rule that whatever you touch, touches you. This maxim has scientific backings in ecology and philosophical echoes in Taoism and in Zen. Le Guin doesn't claim to be a brilliant stylist or an original thinker. She has said modestly that she works best with what she calls «fortune cookie ideas» suggested by someone else. Through her stories she shows how simple concepts hide a mass of complexity and contradiction that can create anarchy when human beings try to act on them.

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city, Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights over the music and the singing. All the processions wound towards the north side of the city, where on the great water-meadow called the Green Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear at all but a halter without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the banners that marked the racecourse snap and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?

They were not simple folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer much any more. All smiles have become

archaic. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, bland Utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But 1o praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy. How can I tell you about the people of Omelas? They were not naive and happy children — though their children were, in fact, happy. They were mature, intelligent, passionate adults whose lives were not wretched. O miracle! but I wish I could describe it better. I wish I could convince you. Omelas sounds in my words like a city in a fairy tale, long ago and far away, once upon a time. Perhaps it would be best if you imagined it as your own, fancy bids, assuming it will rise to the occasion, for certainly I cannot suit you all. For instance, how about technology? I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people. Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however — that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance, etc. — they could perfectly

well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous devices not yet invented here, floating light-sources, fuelless power, a cure for the common cold. Or they could have none of that: it doesn't matter. As you like it. I incline to think that people from towns up and down the coast have been coming in to Omelas during the last days before the Festival on very fast little trains and double-decked trams and that the train station of Omelas is actually the handsomest building in town, though plainer than the magnificent Farmers' Market. But even granted trains, I fear that Omelas so far strikes some of you as goody-goody. Smiles, bells, parades, horses...

One thing I know there is none or in Omelas is guilt. But what else should there be? What else, what else belongs in the joyous city? The sense of victory, surely, the celebration of courage. A boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor of the world's summer this is what swells the hearts of the people of Omelas, and the victory they celebrate is that of life.

Most of the processions have reached the Green Fields by now. A marvelous smell of cooking goes forth from the red and blue tents of the provisioners. The faces of small children are amiably sticky; in the benign grey beard of a man a couple of crumbs of rich pastry are entangled. The youths and girls have mounted their horses and are beginning to group around the starting line of the course. An old woman, small, fat, and laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket, and tall young men wear her flowers in their shining hair. A child of nine or ten sits at the edge of the crowd, alone, playing on a wooden flute. People pause to listen, and they smile, but they do not speak to him, for he never ceases playing and never sees them, his dark eyes wholly rapt in the sweet, thin magic of the tune.

He finishes, and slowly lowers his hands holding the wooden flute. As if that little private silence were the signal, all at once a trumpet

sounds from the pavilion near the starting line: imperious, melancholy, piercing. The horses rear on their slender legs, and some of them neigh in answer. Sober-faced, the young riders stroke the horses' necks and soothe them, whispering, «Quiet, quiet, there my beauty, my hope.... «They begin to form in rank along the starting line. The crowds along the racecourse are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun.

Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No? Then let me describe one more thing.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In *one* corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, dotted, foul-smelling heads, stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits hunched in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes — the child has no understanding of time or interval — sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at

the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks. «1 will be good,» it says. «Please let me out. I will be good!» They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, «eh-haa, eh-haa, «and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery.

This is usually explained to children when they are between eight and twelve, whenever they seem capable of understanding; and most of those who come to see the child are young people, though often enough an adult comes, or comes back, to see the child. No matter how well the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they had thought themselves superior to. They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations. They would like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do. If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing, indeed, but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of

thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed.

The terms are strict and absolute; there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child.

Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced this terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives. Theirs is no rapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there sniveling in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

Now do you believe in them? Are they not more credible? But there is one more thing to tell, and this is quite incredible.

At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all.

Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas, Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist, But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Comprehension check: What do you learn about the city of Omelas from the first paragraph of the story? Is Omelas a typical American city? Is it usual that a city or town «strikes as goody-goody»? Why are the citizens of Omelas described as «not simple folk»? What is happiness from the author's point of view? Do you agree that «happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive»? How are the author's speculations about happiness mingled with the description of the inhabitants of Omelas? While talking about Omelas the author continually uses the words «joy» and «joyous.» In what contexts do they appear in the text and why? How does the tone of the narration change when the author starts talking about «one more thing»? Is there a sudden change in the mood of the story? What do you learn about the child? Why is the child referred to as «it»? Why is the child kept imprisoned and in horrible conditions? How do the citizens of Omelas feel about it? Does the author sound sympathetic, indifferent, or dis-

approving when speaking about the child? Why do some people walk away from Omelas? Who are they and where do they usually go? Is Omelas a «city of happiness»? Where is the climax of the story? How does the tone of the narration change after it? What is the conflict of the story? Is it right «to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one»? What other feelings does the author speak about (guilt, compassion, etc.)? What is «the terrible paradox» of the story?

2. Vocabulary units: to make assumptions, sophisticated, to condemn, to rise to the occasion, exuberance, feeble-minded, malnutrition, abominable, outrageous, to come to terms with, to brood over/about, compassion, poignancy, profundity.

3. Linguistic analysis: find infinitive constructions performing different functions in the sentence (subject, predicate, etc.) and examples of Subjunctive Mood and explain their uses in the context. Do long or short sentences prevail in the text? Why? What is the effect achieved?

4. Discussion: How would you summarize the main idea of the story? Would you consider this story deeply philosophical? Is it a psychomyth? How can this genre be defined? Is the notion of «the lost soul» important for the under-standing of the story? Does the central idea of the story remind you of F. M. Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*? Do you agree with Ursula Le Guin that «whatever you touch, touches you.»? What values does the story deal with?

Commentary
by Olga Rudak **(group 505)**

The story under interpretation is written by Ursula Le Guin, the author who brings to the writing of fantasy fiction a wealth of literary scholar-

ship, crediting Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov and Virginia Woolf as her primary influences. Most of her stories like «The ones who walk away from Omelas» are about reciprocal relationships, illustrating a sort of golden rule that whatever you touch, touches you. Through her stories she shows how simple concepts hide a mass of complexity and contradiction that can create anarchy when human beings try to act on them. The work is a deeply philosophical and psychological study of social values and social laws and of the eternal question about the price of happiness.

The story is a 3rd person narration, though the narrator is explicit, mainly through remarks and rhetorical questions referring to the reader.

The story comprises two clearly seen parts built on contrast.

The 1st part opens with the description of Omelas, the paradise city, where all citizens live in harmony and happiness. People are a real community helping and loving each other. A stream of epithets all with positive meaning underlines this idea: bright-towered, cheerful, joyous, noble, smiling. Children are compared to the swallows and even the horses are excited. Verbs of movement like moved, went dancing, dodged in and out create of live. The author also creates a strong sense of freedom — we can feel much air in the city through simple lexical repetition; the colours are also symbolic — green fields, white-gold fire, sunlit air, dark blue of the sky. People are celebrating the Festival of Summer.

This external description of the folks is strengthened by their inner characteristics. They were not simple folks. They were not naive and happy children, but mature, intelligent, passionate adults who celebrated the world's summer; their victory was that of life. The 1st part is finished with the bright simile, underlining the handsomest and the most cloudless life ever possible: The crowds along the race course are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind.

At the beginning of the 2nd part the tone of narration changes. The author starts speaking about one more thing.

From the city full of sun and light and happiness the reader gets into the

sordid basement, containing a little child. This child is imprisoned there and he is not a person — the folks refer to him as «it». Numerical repetition of this word together with words of derogatory meaning like dustily, rusty, fumbles, rattles, kick, peer in, scream, whine give us an ugly picture of a lost soul, leading a life of lonely torment. All day long it sits in the corner near mops and a bucket. The door is locked and nobody ever comes or speaks to it. It looks disgusting — its belly protrudes, its buttocks are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement. The contrast with the first part is shocking. There is no reason why it should be in prison at all in such a harmonic society. The author tries to find a logical explanation: perhaps it was born defective, or has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. But the terrible paradox exists.

Those are the terms — the social law that makes all these people's happiness, beauty and health wholly dependable on this child's abominable misery. Here arises the question of the price of happiness — the bitter injustice of the people is not illogical — there is no rapid irresponsible happiness. It is the existence of the child that makes possible the prosperity of their lives. But though the explanation is quite clear the author does not support or approve it. She feels compassion and sympathy for that poor creature made a scapegoat by a vicious society. The child screams and she screams with it: Please let me out. I will be good! This quotation is the climax of the story.

The child remains unheard. But some people after having seen it do not go home. They go out in the streets and leave Omelas, that city of happiness, for another one, the city of justice.

As for the style of the story, we may describe it as sophisticated. The abundance of words like to condemn, abominable, malnutrition, outrageous, to come to term with, compassion, poignancy make the whole narration sound complex and provokes serious thinking.

As for the grammatical means, first of all it is prevalence of long sen-

tences in the first part and short in the 2nd. In the 1st part they are needed to underline the nobility of Omelas's architecture, the poignancy of its music and the profundity of its science. The 2nd part with its short simple sentences serves to contrast the ugly child and basement and the prosperity of the city.

In the 2nd part we could also find examples of conditional sentences:

If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing, indeed, but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed.

This example shows the impossibility of compromise in the society. Everybody thinks of this dependence to justify their refusal to act and change something. And the hyperbole «It was too degraded and imbecile, too uncouth to respond to humane treatment» only adds to their indecisiveness, never making them think that it is the society and their laws that have made this child so unbearable and disgusting.

To summarize, in this story the author draws our attention to the problem of relations between individuality and community and one more time emphasises Dostoyevsky's idea that no technical achievement and social wonder is worth a tear of a child.

Analysis
by Julia Kalinina **(group503)**

The text under consideration is an extract from the novel «The ones who walk away from Omelas» belonging to the pen of Ursula Le Guin. Speaking about the author, we can say that Ursula is an American writer of science fiction and fantasy, a poet and a critical essayist. Le Guin has examined large ethical, moral and social issues in her work. «The ones who walk away from Omelas» was first published in 1973. The story is

told in the first person. This feature is important, because we see the events, the way of life, thoughts through the eyes of one person and clearly understand all the emotions the character went through.

The given extract under analysis depicts an Utopian society, in which Omelas happiness is made in such a way that one small child should be unhappy in order for the other people to be happy.

The theme of the story is a moralistic one. The story is basically about a miserable society, where nobody would agree «to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of one»..

The extract under analysis consists of several themes: social (because we can clearly see the way how people lived in the place like Omelas, what rules they observed and for what purpose), psychological (why people should obey strict rules, for what purpose; people were «happy», but why they visited that miserable child and didn't act), philosophical every person of a society has a choice: whether you like to live in a happy Omelas or leave Omelas's society).

The text can be divided into three parts:

1. Description of Omelas.

2. Description of the poor child.

3. Choice: what do you prefer: to live in an Utopian society or leave it forever?

The scene is set in Omelas. I think that Ursula used this name in order to show that it is symbolic, that this proper name is important. She wanted to show us that it is an Utopian society, that people are equal and miserable, they are not worthy of having names. The main characters of the story are ordinary «happy» people, who live in Omelas, and on the contrast we also notice one small child, who exists in a locked room. Ursula gives us a detailed description of the child; we see definite conditions, in which that small 'it' lives. The author used the repetition of «it» proving what that child meant for the Utopian society. The repetition of the

word «door» is given in the description of the room, where that child lived to show us that he isn't free, that this small child is like a bird in cage.

Describing the place, where Omelas's society lived, the author used oxymoron (such phrases like «sweetness of the air», «sunlit air» are given here to show that «happiness» isn't real, because we clearly see in which conditions people live). The repetition of «old» and «they» prove that this society is miserable; that conditions, in which they live are not so good and bright, as they seem at first sight — they are exaggerated. Besides, Ursula used anadiplosis («only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting») describing that miserable society. Analyzing this part I found out that the author used different symbols:

1. *The title of the story is symbolic — we can clearly understand that strong persons will leave Omelas to get freedom.*
2. *The word «happy» has a symbolic meaning, because every person has his own understanding of the word «happy», has his own meaning and interpretation of it.*
3. *Colours, which are given in the text, are also symbolic. For instance, «gold» and «silver» colours describe the «atmosphere»: the gold colours mean the colours of fortune and status.*

The text abounds in details. Phrases are overloaded with adjectives and various types of modifying elements (for example, «the streamers of silver, gold and green»). The author used elliptical sentences: «O miracle!», «No?», «As you like it.», showing that what you want to see, you'll see.

By way of general appraisal of the story I'd like to point out that the story reflects different social, philosophical and psychological problems, it helps the reader to understand the conditions in which people could live. It is a very absorbing, exiting and moralistic story. It helps to understand that people are not free, that everybody lives under some strict rules and circumstance, and it depends on a person to live in harmony with those strict rules or leave this society.

Analysis
by Nadeshda Rogotneva (group 503)

The extract under consideration belongs to the pen of Ursula Le Guin, an American writer famous for her science fiction and fantasy fiction novels and short stories. Most of her stories like «The ones who walk away from Omelas» are about reciprocal relationships, illustrating the sort of golden rule that whatever you touch, touches you. Through her stories she shows how simple concepts hide a mass of complexity and contradiction that can create anarchy when human beings try to act on them.

The story «The ones who walk away from Omelas» by Ursula Le Guin is a philosophical fantasy fiction story that describes the life of people of a city called Omelas which does not exist in reality. The story is basically written in the third person, thus the author's presence remains non—committal. Nevertheless the narrator finds herself in digressions and recollections where she sounds bitterly ironic.

The story narrating about the celebration of the Festival of Summer in the city of Omelas can be divided into three parts. The first one is devoted to the description of the so-called idealistic scene of the city, the «city of happiness», the city that appears before the eyes of the viewer who suspects nothing bad in it. The exposition makes the reader feel the beauty and the glory of the city: everything is ready for the celebration; everything is bright, clean and sparkling. This impression is achieved through the lexical field of colour and light: boats «sparkled with flags», horses` manes were «braided with streamers of silver, gold and green», the air was «sunlit», and there was «a shimmering of gong and tambourine» and so on. All the things around were cleaned out and polished as if to throw dust in the eyes of viewer. Every object and creature seems to understand the mysterious sense of what is going to happen. Thus horses are personified as well as air, banners and other things: horses «boasted to one another», banners «snapped and fluttered» and so on.

Even the city itself is addressed to as «she» as if it were an alive creature.

As the narration goes on the author tries to give the reader her idea of what the people from Omelas were like. She underlines several times the fact that it is not an easy thing to describe the city's citizens resorting to rhetorical questions: «How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?» The narrator ascribes to them such qualities as maturity, intelligence, passion but she warns the reader not to perceive them as «goody-goody» while Omelas was not a city from a fairy-tale but the one that could really exist as well as any other city of the present day. But as distinct from Omelas our cities are deprived of any possibility of happiness. The author sounds bitterly ironic giving her evaluation of the attitude of modern people to the concept of happiness. She employs a parallel construction brining out her verdict: «Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting». The author seems to remind the reader of the fact that sometimes the appearance is deceitful and it would be imprudent to believe immediately the impression Omelas produces at first sight.

The narrator tries to foresee the reaction of the reader to her description of the city, she is sure that the reader would doubt the idealistic scene given by her. She addresses the reader with rhetoric questions: «Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No?» These are the questions that finish the first part.

The second part is devoted to the description of the city life hidden from the eyes of the stranger. As the author puts it, it is «one more thing» that is worth being discussed. It is a child that serves as a kind of a scapegoat, which accepts all the sins of the city. Describing the morbid life of the child the narrator employs present tense to make the description more vivid and terrifying and addresses to the child as to a generalized image. She even employs the pronoun «it» instead of she or he. The place of the child's dwelling is not clearly defined either: it lives perhaps in a cellar or perhaps in a basement, it lives «in one corner of the little

room», it is neither girl nor boy. The image of this child is sure to be allegoric and symbolic; it is a kind of pay for the happy and tranquil life. The child and the people of Omelas remind of the parties who have signed the contract. To underline this fact the author resorts to the vocabulary of the law: «Those are the terms». She employs such epithets as «strict» and «absolute» to describe these terms.

As for the author herself she does not give her direct attitude to the events and people described but nevertheless her evaluation of it is obviously negative. Her reaction to it coincides with that one of children of Omelas who one day have to see that child. The narrator considers the reaction of the unspoiled children to be a true and a faithful one because children perceive the world with open hearts. They have to face that «terrible paradox» and «go home in tears or in a tearless rage». But this natural reaction is gradually strangled by the realization that it is the necessary condition of their happy life. As the time passes they realize that it is not only child that is not free but they themselves as well. They are captured by the terrible conditions of the reality.

The third part is devoted to the description of those people who do not agree to the present way of life. They are eager to look for their own sense of life devoid of the sufferings of the innocent child. The search of their way in life is associated with the mage of road, the road leading to their own happiness. That is why the word «walk» is used a number of times.

Thus in her short story Ursula Le Guin gave her view on the life of present day people who have lost the true understanding of what happiness of life is. She told the reader that there exist two kinds of people: those who are deprived of conscience and ready to build their happiness on the sufferings of other people, who can enjoy the fake, artificial happiness and those who do not do any evil to anybody and strive for their own happiness notwithstanding all the difficulties which have to be overcome on this complicated way. Ursula Le Guin made the reader clearly understand that not every person is ready to follow such a life. But she stays rather impartial in her attitude while it is a personal choice.

Analysis
by Nickolai Demenshin (group 503)

Ursula Le Guin (b. 1929) is the daughter of Theodora Kweber, a writer, and Alfred Louis Kroeber, a pioneering anthropologist at the University of California at Berkeley. From her family background Le Guin acquired a double orientation, humanistic and scientific, that shows in ail her writing. She was educated at Radcliffe College and Columbia University, where she completed a Master's thesis in medieval romance literature. In 1953 she married the historian Charles Le Guin, with whom she has had three children. Although she wrote her first science-fiction story at the age of twelve, she didn't begin publishing until twenty years later.

Although Le Guin's earliest work primarily attracted a devoted audience of science-fiction readers, her later work — especially «The Left Hand of Darkness» — has wider appeal. In that novel she explored the theme of androgyny on the planet Winter (Gethen), where inhabitants may adopt alternately male and female roles. Le Guin insists on Aristotle's definition of Homo sapiens as social animals, and she shows how difficult it is to think of our fellow humans as people, rather than as men and women.

Le Guin brings to the writing of fantasy fiction a wealth of literary scholarship, crediting Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, and Virginia Woolf (among others) as her primary influences. Most of her stories, like «The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas», are about reciprocal relationships, illustrating the sort of golden rule that whatever you touch, touches you. This maxim has scientific backings in ecology and philosophical echoes in Taoism and in Zen. Le Guin doesn't claim to be a brilliant stylist or an original thinker. She has said modestly that she works best with what she calls «fortune cookie ideas» suggested by someone else. Through her stories she shows how simple concepts hide a mass of complexity and contradiction that can create anarchy when human beings try to act on them.

The portion under analysis is a story entitled «The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas». It has no plot, no characters, no dialogue; merely a setting, the city Omelas. It is often used in discussing the nature and adequacy of Utilitarian theories of justice. In the story, Omelas is a utopian city of happiness and delight, whose inhabitants are intelligent, cultured and refined. Everything about Omelas is pleasing, except for the secret of its happiness: the good fortune of Omelas requires that an unfortunate child be kept in filth, darkness and misery, and that all her citizens know of this oncoming of age.. Some of them walk away; the story ends «The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.» The central idea of this psychomyth is the scapegoat tidea.

The description of the utopian city is rather vivid and bright but it seems to me very unreal and hardly possible. Nevertheless the author employs several syntactical expressive means to stress the idea of abundance of life, joy and light in this city: the repetition of notions characterizing Omelas and its citizens is rather extensive — «red roofs», «painted walls», «moss-grown gardens», «great parks and public buildings», «avenues of trees» etc. The vivid epithets are used deliberately to show us the brightness and happiness of this city and its dwellers. «Dancing» seems to me the key term here — «people went dancing, the procession was a dance» — people were so happy in their dance during the Festival of Summer (written in capitals to stress the idea of eternal summer, joy and happiness), children were singing like birds in the sky — «like swallows» — seems like these people had forgotten everything bad, everything they do not wish to know and now there are no limits for them now. But «some were decorous» — «old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen» who are described as «quiet» which sounds more like disregard or disapproval rather than like advantage. Throughout the text we can see some graphic expressive means —

the words are italicized or capitalized, for example local geographical names, such as «Green Fields» and «Eighteen Peaks». The fact that they are capitalized is to emphasize the ideal nature surrounding the city, the respectful attitude to it, but on the other hand the citizens had nothing else to do but give names to some geographical locations instead of self-improvement. But they are depicted as ideal; we all know that an ideal is unachievable. So these people are flawed just like everyone else but are depicted in a very idyllic manner as well the nature and animals — horses were «restive», «Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green.», «The horses wore no gear at all» — it shows the seeming perfection of these people and ideal harmony between nature and man. The great number of colours mentioned (referring to the lexical field of «colour») is employed by the author to show the endless brightness and colour variety of the utopian city. It's noticeable that no other part or place of the world is mentioned. There are just those Eighteen Peaks which probably surround Omelas and cover and protect it from the outer «evil» world. The city is unique and no other explanation is necessary. On the other hand this city might seem to be a so-called «pilot region» where people live according to their own laws and values (which are few as stated by the author). From time to time the narration is interrupted by small paragraphs containing some samples of represented speech, exclamatory sentences and questions to the reader — «Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?», «But what else should there be? What else, what else belongs in the joyous city?», «Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No?» etc. The expression «given a description such as this one» is repeated by the author twice. One may assume that the author herself thinks she doesn't sound convincing enough! The narration is interrupted here by the author's thoughts and recollections. The author is not sure that that «goody-goody» town won't look like a joke to the reader. «What else, what else belongs in the joyous city?» — the author keeps on asking rhetorical questions as though she wants to make sure she knows the answers. In my opinion some philosophical outlook is ex-

pressed here: the author finds it difficult to define «happiness» — is it just the presence of everything good, bright and «joyous»?

When the narration comes to «one more thing» one can notice that the 2nd part of the story starts here. This part will explain how an «ideal» city is possible and if it's really so ideal. «In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, dotted, foul-smelling heads stand near a rusty bucket. … In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded» — the child devoid of everything including his mind and gender serves as a scapegoat for the «happy» citizens of Omelas. The child is constantly referred to as «it» which proves that he (or she) is mere nobody here, but it's IT who makes happiness possible — «They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, and the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there snivelling in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.» The emotions which the visitors experience are however varied. That's why we can see so many homogeneous members —»They feel anger, outrage, impotence» etc. But «The terms are strict and absolute»— this sentence is presented in the form of a separate paragraph to emphasize how strict and serious it all was. The contrast is the basic literary means here — the contrast between «an imbecile and degraded» person (well, not even a person) and happiness and (even) wisdom of city dwellers! This is the great contrast covering all possible spheres of life; this child is a representation of the «other side» of people's happiness, which actually makes such kind of happiness disgusting and «abominable» just like the child's misery. Probably that is why some people «fall silent for a day or two, and then leave home» after they have seen this child. Seems like they have understood something very important and walked in search for it. The word «Walk» is capi-

talized in the original text because these people turned out to be actually MOVING to somewhere unlike those who live in Omelas. Unlike those who are already dead in their perfect abominable happiness and...misery. «They go on» — they reach the mountains and pass even further into the darkness! But this kind of darkness is better than that kind of happiness. This small sentence is not part of any other sentence because it has a special importance and emphasis. These people GO. Or rather ARE GOING. Omelas citizen did NOT know where they were going (if they were going anywhere at all). Though people who left Omelas don't know their destination, «they seem to know where they are going». The concluding event reveals the author's interest in some Eastern philosophy. The whole story is an enjoyable piece of literary art which makes people think about happiness and those sacrifices one should or should not make to achieve it. The story has a strong emphasis on the essence of people's happiness; it deals with the roles people play in the society and the equilibrium between vice and virtue.

Analysis
by Anton Zherebyatev (group 503)

Ursula K. Le Guin (b. 1929), the daughter of the distinguished anthropologist A. L. Kroeber and writer Theodora Kroeber, attended Radcliffe College (B. A., 1951) and Columbia University (M. A., 1952). Among her most philosophically significant novels are The Left Hand Of Darkness (1969), about a race of androgynous people who may become either male or female; The Dispossessed (1974), in which two neighbouring worlds are home to antithetical societies, one capitalist, the other anarchic, both of which stifle freedom in particular ways; The Word for World Is Forest (1972), a parable of the destruction of indigenous peoples set on a planet colonized by Earth; and Always Coming Home (1985), concerning the Kesh, survivors of nuclear war in California. The last-

mentioned work includes poetry, prose, legends, autobiography, and a tape recording of Kesh music. Le Guin also wrote fiction and many essays on fantasy fiction, feminist issues, writing, and other topics, some of them collected in The Language of the Night (1979), Dancing at the Edge of the World (1989), and Steering the Craft (1998).

The piece of writing under analysis is a short story entitled «The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas». The text belongs to the genre of narrative prose and is written as a one-sided dialogue between the narrator and the reader. The strong point of the author is the brilliant ability to describe things and events paying attention to the details, enabling the former to take a more objective view of the events.

By this work of the author seems to voice his protest against the dogmatic terms of law and advocate basic anarchist ideas, for example repudiating the state power and mistrusting the government — as well as many mainstream American authors of the epoch, such as Nelson Angren or Joseph Heller.

The story depicts the contrast between prosperity and misery, between happiness and helpless despair. The action takes place in the mythical town Omelas. First the author in a fairy-tale manner describes the city festival in detail, paying attention to the dancing people, shining flags, shimmering of gong and tambourine, little horse riders, using a broad set of epithets together with together with such syntactical patterns as repetition and anaphora: «between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved.» The narration is vividly animated by bright colouring of items described: «Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. <...> Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves.»

The introduction is quite optimistic, but here the expectations of a reader are broken. For the narrator is not going to speak about happiness and cheer. The reader is confronted by a philosophical paradox: «The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. <...> Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive.» Thus we have now a slight idea of the society in Omelas: to gain happiness in the city people are getting rid of what they think to be immoral, dissolute, destructive.

«Goody-goody» is an epithet used by the narrator to describe Omelas in general, at first sight. The concept of victory presents in the narration. The attention is drawn by a boy playing the flute. People smiled at him, but «he never ceases playing and never sees them» — a fine alliteration depicting the slow rhythm of a tune. The festival is solemnly started as soon as the young boy finished playing.

«Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No?» A set of questions in the narrative started the next episode of a story. The narration follows to the basement of one of the beautiful buildings. Again we observe a very detailed description of objects: «In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, dotted, foul-smelling heads stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. <...> It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.» The author uses similar syntactical frames to depict the child's primitiveness and its position in the society «It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it

would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in.»

The miserable creature in the closed room without windows is neither a boy, nor a girl — just «it». The child is afraid of everything in the room and is fruitlessly seeking for help. Nobody enters, once a day some people come to look at him with «frightened, disgusted eyes».

Everybody in Omelas knows about the child, everybody knows where it is. This very child is the other side of happiness and prosperity. «It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, and the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children.» That is why no one is going to help him. The child is shown to adolescent boys and girls, they weep of rage and injustice before they understand the necessity of this. But there are few people who walk away.

The story is devoted to ones who walk away from Omelas «through the beautiful gates». These people are against the existing terms. They do not know exactly where they move, and the narrator doesn't judge whether they are right or not letting the reader think about it.

3.3. Iris Murdoch. A Word Child

Iris Murdoch was born in Dublin in 1919 and educated at Badminton School, Bristol, and at Oxford, where she later was a tutor in philosophy. In 1953 she published a brilliant study of Jean-Paul Sartre, and in 1954 her first novel, *Under the Net*, appeared to critical acclaim. The many novels that followed confirmed her growing reputation as the wittiest and most intelligent writer at work in England. «What an incorrigible, irresistible conjurer-up this woman is!» (John Updike)

A Word Child is one of Iris Murdoch's most original and profound nov-

els. Hilary Burde, a poor boy who has been rescued from a delinquent childhood by a natural gift for words, experiences a personal catastrophe that causes him to exchange the beginnings of a brilliant career at Oxford for a life of self-destructive obscurity. Now, some twenty years after the event, he is about to encounter the man whom he once grievously wronged. The meeting will be a chance to redeem not only himself but also others — Crystal, his almost illiterate sister; Thomasina, his zany mistress; Frank and Laura Impiatt, a childless couple; Clifford, his homosexual friend; Christopher, his flower-child roommate; a mysterious Indian girl called Biscuit; and the impetuous Lady Kitty, with whom he falls in love although she is married to the very man he has harmed. A tragicomic meditation on the metaphysics of love and salvation, *A Word Child* «grips the reader as only art can, when it is competing with life on its own terms and fearing nothing.» (*The New York Times Book Review*)

THURSDAY

Mr Osmond taught French and very occasionally Latin at the modest unambitious filthy little school which I attended. He had been at the school for many years but I did not become his pupil until I was about fourteen, with my loutish reputation well developed. I had, until then, learnt practically nothing. I could (just) read, but although I had attended classes in history and French and mathematics I had imbibed extremely little of these subjects. The realization that people had simply given up trying to teach me anything enlightened me at last, more than the lectures from magistrates, about how utterly shipwrecked I was; and increased my anger and my sense of injustice. For with the dawning despair came also the tormenting idea that in spite of everything I was clever, I had a mind though I had never wanted to use it. I *could* learn things, only now it was too late and nobody would let me. Mr Osmand looked at me quietly. He had grey eyes. He gave me his full *attention*.

I suspect that many children are saved by saints and geniuses of this kind. Why are such people not made rich by a grateful society? How exactly the miracle happened is another thing which I cannot very clearly recall. Suddenly my mind woke up. Floods of light came in. I began to learn. I began to want to excel in new ways. I learnt French. I started on Latin. Mr Osmand promised me Greek. An ability to write fluent correct Latin prose began to offer me an escape from (perhaps literally) the prison house, began in time to show me vistas headier and more glorious than any I had ever before known how to dream of. In the beginning was the word. *Amo, amas, amat* was my open sesame, 'Learn these verbs by Friday' the essence of my education; perhaps it is *mutatis mutandis* the essence of any education. I also learnt, of course, my own language, hitherto something of a foreign tongue. I learnt from Mr Osmand how to write the best language in the world accurately and clearly and, ultimately, with a hard careful elegance. I discovered words and words were my salvation. I was not, except in some very broken-down sense of that ambiguous term, a love child. I was a word child.

Probably Mr Osmand was not a genius at anything except teaching. He encouraged me to read the classics of English literature; but his own preferences were more narrowly patriotic. I buried Sir John Moore at Corunna, I threw my empty revolver down the slope, I shouldered white men's burdens east of Suez, I played up and played the game. My father, from the terrace below, called me down to ride. My head was stored with images of the East, Newbolt's East, Conrad's East, Kipling's East. What I read in these books thrilled me with a deep mysterious significance which brought tears to my eyes. I who had no mother could claim at least a mother land, and these exotic tales were about England too and, after it all, hearts at peace under an English heaven. There was a sense of family. But most haunting of them all to my young mind was the story of Toomai of the elephants. 'Kala Nag, Kala Nag, wait for me. ' Perhaps this beautiful picture of the elephant turn-

ing round to pick up the child symbolized for me my own escape. The elephant would turn and would carry me away, would carry me to goodness and salvation, to the open space at the centre of things, to the dance.

Mr Osmand was a member of the Church of England, but I think that his religion too was largely patriotic, concerned less with God than with the Queen. (Queen Victoria, of course.) I do not recall that we ever talked about God. But I did imbibe from my wonderful teacher a sort of religion or ideology which certainly influenced my life. Mr Osmand believed in competition. It was necessary to excel. He loved and cherished the examination system. (And rightly. It was my road out of the pit.) *Parvenir a tout prix,* was my own conception of the matter. We were both very ambitious for me. But Mr Osmand did not simply want me to win prizes. He wanted me, in his own old-fashioned and austere conception of it, to be good. His message to me was the same as Crystal's. Of course he chided my violence, but more profoundly, and through his very teaching, he inculcated in me a respect for accuracy, a respect, to put it more nobly, for truth. 'Never leave a passage until you thoroughly understand every word, every case, every detail of the grammar. ' A fluffy vague understanding was not good enough for Mr Osmand. Grammar books were my books of prayer. Looking up words in the dictionary was for me an image of goodness. The endless endless task of learning new words was for me an image of life.

Violence is a kind of magic, the sense that the world will always yield. When I understood grammatical structure I understood something which I respected and which did not yield. The exhilaration of this discovery, though it did not 'cure' me, informed my studies and cast on them a light which was not purely academic. I learnt French and Latin and Greek at school. Mr Osmand taught me German in his spare time. I taught myself Italian. I was not a philological prodigy. I lacked that uncanny gift which some people have for language structure which seems akin to a gift for music or calculation. I never became con-

cerned with the metaphysical aspects of language. (I am not interested in Chomsky. That places me.) And I never thought of myself as a 'writer' or tried to become one. I was just a brilliant plodder with an aptitude for grammar and an adoration for words. Of course I was a favourite and favoured pupil. I suspect that Mr Osmand regarded me at first simply as a professional challenge, after I had been generally 'given up'. Later he certainly came to love me. Mr Osmand was unmarried. His shabby sleeve often caressed my wrist, and he liked to lean his arm against mine as we looked at the same text. Nothing else ever happened. But through the glowing electrical pressure of that arm I learnt another lesson about the world.

I went to Oxford. No child from the school had ever been farther afield than a northern polytechnic. In the milieu in which Crystal and Aunt Bill had their being Oxford was a complete mystery: 'Oxford college', somewhere in the south, like a teacher's training college only somehow 'posh'. I told Crystal about Oxford when I knew scarcely more about it myself. This was to be the escape route. For of course, as I worked away at irregular verbs and gerundives and sequence of tenses I was working not only for myself but for Crystal. I would rescue her and take her with me. And when I had learnt everything, I would teach her. At fourteen I had been a small though muscular imp. At sixteen I was a six-foot adolescent. With Mr Osmand and my new talents and my new ambition I feared no one. I visited Crystal whenever I pleased, I intimidated Aunt Bill, and Crystal and I made plans to become rich and live together.

At Oxford I studied French and Italian. Mr Osmand wanted me to read 'Greats' but I preferred a more linguistic course; the idea of philosophy frightened me and I wanted to be sure of excelling. I was extremely diligent but also played games. Intoxicatingly soon after playing cricket for the first time, I was grinding my teeth over missing my blue. I learnt Spanish and modern Greek and started Russian. I got rid of my northern vowels. Crystal, at school, then working in the choco-

late factory, came down occasionally to marvel at my new Jerusalem. We went into the country on bicycles. Mr Osmand visited me once during my first year. Somehow the visit depressed us both. He reminded me of too many things. And doubtless he felt that he had lost me. I wrote to him for a while, then stopped writing. I soon gave up returning to the north. I spent my vacations in college or on occasional grant-aided trips to France or Italy. (p. 21—23)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:

1. What is the author's general tone throughout the chapter?
2. What is the narrator's background? Contrast Hilary Burde at the beginning of the chapter with the point at which he became «a favourite and favoured pupil». What was special about him?
3. What is the narrator's attitude to Mr Osmand? Quote the text to prove your point of view.
4. How do you interpret the phrase «Violence is a kind of magic, the sense that the world will always yield.»
5. Who is Chomsky? What is he famous for?
6. What similes and comparisons make the passage especially expressive? What is the role of metaphors in the text? Give examples.
7. What writing techniques does the author use? What purpose do they serve?
8. What imagery makes the passage very colorful? Why does Iris Murdoch use foreign words in certain contexts?
9. Discuss the significance of the title of the chapter. Express your opinion about the philosophical ideas contained in the text. Justify your point of view.
10. What is the message of the chapter?

Chapter analysis
by Kirill Egiptsev (group 503)

Dame Jean Iris Murdoch was born on July, 15,1919. She was an Irish-born British writer and philosopher, best known for her novels, which combine rich characterization and compelling plotlines, usually involving ethical or sexual themes. Murdoch was born in a family of a former Presbyterian sheep farmer. Murdoch was strongly influenced by Plato, Freud and Jean-Paul Sartre. Her novels are by turns intense and bizarre, filled with dark humour and unpredictable plot twists. She went on to produce 25 more novels after 'Under the Net' and other works of philosophy and drama until 1995, when she began to suffer the early effects of Alzheimer's disease. She died at 79 in 1999.

The portion under analysis is a chapter, called 'Thursday', from a novel named 'A Word Child', published in 1975. This is an enjoyable read, this chapter is true-to-life, and it's clever and amusing. The theme of this extract is the relationships between people, Hillary (an orphan from a poor family), his teacher — Mr. Osmand and Hillary's sister — Crystal. The narration is told in the 1st person what makes the story sound true-to-life. This chapter is a collection of reminiscences of Hillary's studies at school and university. The chapter starts with a description of the protagonist himself as to his school progress. He was not the best pupil 'at the modest unambitious filthy little school' — such epithets show the status of the school, which probably hampered the academic progress of the main character, and the protagonist's attitude to it. He was clever, but he had never wanted to use his mind — he COULD learn things, but somehow it was too late. The word 'could' written in italics shows the reader that Hillary was an able and clever student, but he was perhaps lazy and now the time is gone, for which he's so much regretful. The word 'attention' is vitalized as well — we can guess the attitude of Mr. Osmand to his pupil — he felt he was a clever student and the teacher hadn't 'given up trying to teach him anything'. But then sud-

denly Hillary's mind woke up and he even began to find the meaning of life in studying and especially in learning new words in Latin and Greek — 'I discovered words and words were my salvation' — notice the repetition of the word 'words'. Hillary was totally immersed in those words. Such Latin expressions as 'amo, amas, amat' and 'mutatis mutandis' show that Hillary understood these notions very clearly even without translation, which he certainly knew. He understood the words and expressions at the level of meaning and essence, which is a very profound understanding of things. Such utterances as 'In the beginning was the word' and 'salvation' refer to the Bible, which shows that this matter was sacred to Hillary. 'Mr. Osmand was not a genius at anything except teaching' — this euphemism proves Hillary's respect to his teacher. Certain utterances of metonymy are a proof of the deep interest in these subjects — 'I buried sir John Moore', 'My head was stored with the images of the East, Newbolt's East, Conrad's East, Kipling's East'. The abundance of proper names is another sign of a great academic progress of Hillary. He began studying other languages, but as he puts it he wasn't a 'philological prodigy', which sounds ironically. Hillary had no idea of principles of generative grammar, for example, since it's mentioned that he wasn't interested in Chomsky. The repetition of the word 'endless' is a sign of an eternal process of learning words. The strange comparison of violence to magic makes the reader think that Hillary found certain pleasure in torturing himself and finding and understanding new grammatical structures or words. So, the protagonist went to Oxford and continued his studies there. He dreamt of taking Crystal there with him and everything he learnt, he learnt for his sister. Mr. Osmand visited him once during the 1st year. It gave them both a feeling that the teacher had lost him, because he stopped writing and visiting him eventually. In the end of the chapter we encounter another word from a lexical field of 'religion', namely 'Jerusalem', which can tell the reader that the new life at Oxford was like a new-found faith for Hillary.

So, this extract reveals the progress of the main character and is abun-

dant in foreign words, religious terms and 'heavenly' epithets, all of which are a sign of the great influence of either the teacher or the education system as a whole upon the protagonist who seems to have found his true self in that.

Commentary
by Olga Rudak (group 505)

The work under interpretation is written by Iris Murdoch (1919—1999), prolific and highly professional British novelist who dealt with ethical and moral issues, sometimes in the light of myths.

Her novel «A Word Child» published in 1976 deals with the trials and tribulations of the title character, Hillary Burde as he attempts to recover his soul from the misery of his troubled past.

As for the main themes of the chapter they are:

— *exploration of the possibility and meaning of redemption;*

— *the nature of the human memory;*

— *the possibility of love for the tarnished soul.*

The chapter which is by turns stirring, witty, painful and joyous describes the life story and the studying experience of Hillary, a young student of a little provincial school in the north of England.

The story is the 1st person narration in the genre of the interior monologue.

The first part describes the attitude of the protagonist towards the school he studied at. Until the age of 14 he learnt practically nothing. He attended all classes but his reputation was that of underachiever. The stream of epithets «unambitious, filthy, little, loutish, utterly shipwrecked» underline the personal catastrophe of the boy whom not a soul in the world could understand and recognize as a personality.

The second part is the turning point in the life of the adolescent. At that moment there appeared Mr. Osmond, a teacher of French and Latin who completely changed the boy's ideal of education and awoke his mind. This complex fully rounded character was alike the boy himself. Unrecognized member of the society, he was a saint and a genius at the same time who possessed generosity and talent enough to enlighten minds of his pupils. Here rhetorical question «Why are such people not made rich by a grateful society?» emphasizes Hillary's attitude towards the higher rich classes of the society unable to see the real values.

So the boy began to learn. And the education became for him the flood of light which showed the escape from the prison house. Here for the first time the author gives us the explanation of the title.

Hillary began learning and in the beginning was the word. This quotation from the Bible underlines the birth of a new person. Having no mother and no family, his home being a prison for him, he found consolation in discovering words of different languages. He was a word child; a child cherished and brought up by a word. In this part the words in Latin «Amo, amas, amat», the first words Hillary learnt by heart, the author compares with the open sesame — the door to paradise and salvation.

The third part presents the thorough description of Hillary's indulgement in studies. He was encouraged to read a lot and mostly patriotic books. East depicted by classics of English literature emphasized the boy's longing for the sense of motherland. His favourite book was a story about an elephant that would carry him to the paradise, where he could find goodness and salvation. It was his idea of escaping from the troubled past.

The idea of motherland in England is strongly connected with religion. All the process of education is so-to-say religiously coloured. To underline this connection the author used a prolonged metaphor: for Hillary grammar books of prayer, looking up words in the dictionary — the image of goodness, the endless task of learning new words — an image of life.

This adoration for words and hard work soon made Hillary a polyglot and changed his reputation — he became a favourite and favoured pupil.

He was just a brilliant plodder, the ideal of a man in the protestant religion whom hard labour and diligence gave an opportunity to go to the paradise.

Here comes the fourth and the last part of the chapter shown in a complete contrast with the previous three. This part opens a new chapter in the life of the protagonist, namely his entering Oxford. Being at first a complete mystery for Hillary, somehow posh, it soon became the escape route through which by reading classics and studying linguistics he could earn the right to rich and decent life and could save his little sister and himself from that poor existence in the disgusting North. The whole atmosphere of the part presents us a new Jerusalem, the strongest metaphor used in the chapter, symbolizing the conflict in the sole of Hillary between his material and spiritual homes and the revival of his soul.

As for the main language characteristics of the chapter, we may say that the whole story is the metaphor on the ground of religion. Beginning from the title and up to the end we meet allusions to the Bible and the essence of Protestant faith. God has created the world for seven days. Thursday was the crucial one, symbolizing the appearance of a Man, a man possessing enormous power for development and improvement. Here we clearly see the meaning of redemption that gives a person the possibility of love and happiness.

Analysis
by Olesya Obriskaya (group 505)

Iris Murdoch (1919—1999) is a famous British novelist known for her philosophical novels. Iris Murdoch was born in Dublin. She lectured

Philosophy from 1948 to 1963 at Oxford University in England. Iris Murdoch is one of the most complex writers in modern English fiction. She is interested in character and depicts people in most bizarre situations, without making a clear moral comment on them. Her inexhaustible powers of invention, the brilliance and maturity of her style turn most of her books into remarkable events in modern letters. In her works I. Murdoch denounces egotism, irresponsibility and voluntarism. She expounds the idea that «the inevitable» is created by people and the motives and actions prompted by their passions.

Thursday is a chapter from the novel «A Word Child». It tells us about the relationship between the teacher and the child. The story is told in the first person. The protagonist of the story, Hillary Burde, is the narrator. In such a way I. Murdoch manages to give a deep psychological insight into her characters. The general tone of the story is encouraging and warm as it makes the reader happy that such genii teachers, saints, exist, though the end of the chapter is depressing.

The gist of the story boils down to the following. Hillary was an underachiever, until the age of 14 he had a loutish reputation at school and teachers gave up teaching him that increased his sense of injustice, as he knew he was clever, he had a mind, though he didn't use it. Everything changed when Mr. Osmond started teaching him. He was the teacher of French and Latin. Hillary developed a great love for word. Words were his salvation. Hillary had no mother — words gave him a sense of family. Mr. Osmond proved to be a genius teacher, more than that he gave his talented pupil his full attention, more tasks and his love. Hillary imbibed from his wonderful teacher a sort of religion. Mr. Osmond taught competition and respect for truth. Hillary considered himself a plodder, lacking any uncanny gifts. Studying for him was the escape route, as Hillary had a hard childhood. He studied not only for himself; he also wanted to help his sister Crystal. Eventually he entered Oxford where he studied French and Italian. Mr. Osmond wanted him to read 'Greats' but Hillary preferred a more linguistic course as the idea of

philosophy frightened him. Gradually he forgot about his teacher. The ending of the chapter is a bit sad, as the reader feels sorry for the fact that the miraculous connection between the teacher and the pupil was cut. The development of the story is that ship-wrecked pupil of 14 with loutish reputation becomes a young man who manages to enter Oxford, the action shifts from the modest unambitious filthy little school to Oxford and grant-aided trips to France and Italy.

The chapter is entitled Thursday; if we take into account that the other chapters of the novel are entitled as days of the week, we can make a conclusion, that Thursday means that one period of Hillary's life is described.

The narrator represents himself as a diligent pupil, a plodder, a person considering his studying as the escape route, in addition to that he is not egoistic, he wants to help his sister Crystal. Hillary is a self-made person. We can't but admit that he is intelligent, ambitious, wanting to excel, but he also lacks love and he's sensitive and noble, able to take and to give love.

If we consider the semantic fields of the extract we can distinguish the theme of religion: Mr. Osmond was compared to a saint, words were Hillary's salvation, grammar books were his books of prayer, he imbibed from Mr. Osmond a new religion, Oxford was his new Jerusalem. We can also distinguish the theme of escape, transition into a new life: Hillary considered his studying as the escape route; Latin words offered him the escape from the prison house, «Perhaps this beautiful picture of the elephant turning round to pick up the child symbolized for me my own escape. The elephant would turn and would carry me away to goodness and salvation, to the open space at the centre of things, to the dance.» The repetition here aims at logical emphasis; it fixes the reader's attention on the key-word «carry away». Metaphor here gives vividness to description and expresses Hillary's expectations of his future life. The symbol of elephant arises — a kind and strong creature, may be it is Mr. Osmond who is implied. The text has allusions. «Amo, amas, amat was

my open sesame». «In the beginning was the word» — a biblical allusion to underline the idea that all changes in Hillary's life started from a word. Then Hillary mentions that «we never talked of God» and that «Mr. Osmond's religion was largely patriotic concerned less with God than with the Queen.» There is a subtle irony about this statement. The theme of love is given special prominence through the epithets «a glowing electrical pressure of arm», it's highlighted that he wasn't a love child, that he lacked family, the word «attention» is given in italics; we can draw conclusions that Hillary's mental and physical transformation was not only due to his talents but also due to his teacher's love and attention. And we can't but mention the theme of industriousness and will, Hillary stresses the fact that he lacked «that uncanny gift», he was not «a philological prodigy», he was «just a brilliant plodder», and he was «extremely diligent» that obviously conveys the idea that Hillary was a self-made person and achieved everything in his life himself. But the ending of the chapter seems a bit sad; the break with the favourite teacher is the fact that Hillary has lost his care and protection. Taking into account the fact that I. Murdoch lectured Philosophy and the mentioning that Hillary didn't read 'Greats' as Mr. Osmond wanted him to but «preferred a more linguistic course as the idea of philosophy frightened him» makes us expect some frustrating events in Hillary's life.

An abundant use of allusions, symbolism, subtle irony, deep psychological insight and wit make Murdoch's style individual.

3.4. Joseph Heller. Catch-22

Joseph heller was born in Brooklyn in 1923. He served as an Air force bombardier in World War II and enjoyed a long career as a writer and a teacher. His best-selling books include *Something Happened, Good as*

Gold, Picture This, and *Closing Time,* but his first novel, *Catch-22,* remains his most famous and acclaimed work. He died in 1999.

The protagonist and hero of the novel is Yossarian. Yossarian is a captain in the Air Force and a lead bombardier in his squadron, but he hates the war. His desire to live has lead him to the conclusion that millions of people are trying to kill him, and he has decided either to live forever or, ironically, die trying.

CHAPTER 5: CHIEF WHITE HALFOAT

Doc Daneeka lived in a splotched gray tent with Chief White Halfoat, whom he feared and despised, «I can just picture his liver,» Doc Daneeka grumbled.

«Picture my liver.» Yossarian advised him.

There's nothing wrong with your liver.»

«That shows how much you don't know,» Yossarian bluffed, and told Doc Daneeka about the troublesome pain in his liver that had troubled Nurse Puckett and Nurse Cramer and all the doctors in the hospital because it wouldn't become jaundice and wouldn't go away.

Doc Daneeka wasn't interested. «You think you've got troubles?» he wanted to know. «What about me? You should've been in my office the day those newlyweds walked in.»

«What newlyweds?»

«Those newlyweds that walked into my office one day. Didn't I ever tell you about them? She was lovely.»

So was Doc Daneeka's office. He had decorated his wailing room with goldfish and one of the finest suites of cheap furniture. Whatever he could he bought on credit, even the goldfish. For the rest, he obtained money from greedy relatives in exchange for shares of the profits. His office was in Staten Island in a two-family firetrap just four blocks away from the ferry stop and only one block south of a supermarket,

three beauty parlors, and two corrupt druggists. It was a comer location, but nothing helped. Population turnover was small, and people clung through habit to the same physicians they had been doing business with for years. Bills piled up rapidly, and he was soon faced with the loss of his most precious medical instruments; his adding machine was repossessed, and then his typewriter. The goldfish died. Fortunately, just when things were blackest, the war broke out.

«It was a godsend,» Doc Daneeka confessed solemnly. «Most of the other doctors were soon in the service, and things picked up overnight. The corner location really started paying off, and I soon found myself handling more patients than I could handle competently. I upped my kickback fee with those two drugstores. The beauty parlors were good for two, three abortions a week. Things couldn't have been better, and then, look what happened. They had to send a guy from the draft board around to look me over. I was Four-F. I had examined myself pretty thoroughly and discovered that I was unit for military service. You'd think my word would be enough, wouldn't you, since I was a doctor in good standing with my county medical society and with my local Better Business Bureau. But no, it wasn't, and they sent this guy around just to make sure I really did have one leg amputated at the hip and was helplessly bedridden with incurable rheumatoid arthritis. Yossarian, we live in an age of distrust and deteriorating spiritual values. It's a terrible thing,» Doc Daneeka protested in a voice quavering with strong emotion. «It's a terrible thing when even the word of a licensed physician is suspected by the country he loves.»

Doc Daneeka had been drafted and shipped to Pianosa as a flight surgeon, even though he was terrified of flying, «I don't have to go looking for trouble in an airplane,» he noted, blinking his beady, brown, offended eyes myopically. «It comes looking for me. Like that virgin I'm telling you about that couldn't have a baby.»

«What virgin?» Yossarian asked. «I thought you were telling me about some newlyweds.»

'That's the virgin I'm telling you about. They were fuse a couple of young kids, and they'd been married, oh, a little over a year when they came walking into my office without an appointment. You should have seen her. She was so sweet and young and pretty. She even blushed when I asked about her periods. I don't think I'll ever stop loving that girl. She was built like a dream and wore a chain around her neck with a medal of Saint Anthony hanging down inside the most beautiful bosom I never saw. 'It must be a terrible temptation for Saint Anthony, ' I joked — just to put her at ease, you know. 'Saint Anthony? ' her husband said. 'Who's Saint Anthony? ' 'Ask your wife, ' I told him. 'She can tell you who Saint Anthony is. ' 'Who is Saint Anthony? ' he asked her. 'Who? ' she wanted to know. 'Saint Anthony, ' he told her, 'Saint Anthony? ' she said. 'Who's Saint Anthony? ' When I got a good look at her inside my examination room I found she was still a virgin. I spoke to her husband alone while she was pulling her girdle back on and hooking it onto her stockings. 'Every night, ' he boasted. A real wise guy, you know. 'I never miss a night, ' he boasted. He meant it, too. 'I even been puttin' it to her morning before the breakfasts she makes me before we go to work, ' he boasted. There was only one explanation. When I had them both together again I gave them a demonstration of intercourse with the rubber models I've got in my office. I've got these rubber models in my office with all the reproductive organs of both sexes that I keep locked up in separate cabinets to avoid a scandal. I mean I used to have them. I don't have anything any more, not even a practice. The only tiling I have now is this low temperature that I'm really starting to worry about. Those two kids I've got working for me in the medical tent aren't worth a damn as diagnosticians. All they know how to do is complain. They think they've got troubles? What about me? They should have been in my office that day with those two newlyweds looking at me as though I were telling them something nobody'd ever heard of before. You never saw anybody so interested. 'You mean like this? ' he asked me, and worked the models for himself awhile. You know, I can see where a certain type of person might get a big kick out of doing just that. That's it, ' told

him, «Now, you go home and try it my way for a few months and see what happens. Okay? ' 'Okay, ' they said, and paid me in cash without any argument, 'Have a good time, ' I told them, and they thanked me and walked out together. He bad his arm around her waist as though he couldn't wait to get her home and put it to her again. A few days later he came back, all by himself and told my nurse he had to see me right away. As soon as we were alone, he punched me in the nose.»

«He did what?»

«He called me a wise guy and punched me in the nose. 'What are you, a wise guy? ' he said, and blocked me. Sat on my ass. Pow! Just like that. I'm not kidding.»

«I know you're not kidding,» Yossarian said, «But why did lie do it?»

«How should I know why he did it?» Doc Daneeka retorted with annoyance.

«Maybe it had something to do with Saint Anthony?»

Doc Daneeka looked at Yossarian blankly. «Saint Anthony?» he asked with astonishment. «Who's Saint Anthony?»

«How should I know?» answered Chief White Halfoat, staggering inside the tent just then with a bottle of whiskey cradled in his arm and sitting himself down pugnaciously between the two of them.

Doc Daneeka rose without a word and moved his chair outside the tent, his back bowed by the compact kit of injustices that was his perpetual burden. He could not bear the company of his roommate.

Chief White Halfoat thought he was crazy. «I don't how what's the matter with that guy,» he observed reproachfully «He's got no brains, that's what's the matter with him, If he had any brains he'd grab a shovel and start digging. Right here in the tent, he'd start digging, right under my cot. He'd strike oil in no time. Don't he know bow that enlisted man struck oil with a shovel back in the States? Didn't he ever bear what happened to that kid — what was the name of that rotten

rat bastard pimp of a snotnose back in Colorado?»

«Wintergreen.»

«Wintergreen.»

«He's afraid,» Yossarian explained.

«Oh, no. Not Wintergreen.» Chief White Halfoat shook his head with undisguised admiration. «That stinking little punk wise-guy son of a bitch ain't afraid of nobody. '

«Doc Daneeka's afraid. That's what's the matter with him.»

«What's he afraid of?»

«He's afraid of you,» Yossarian said. «He's afraid you're going to die of pneumonia.»

«He'd *better* be afraid,» Chief White Halfoat said. A deep, low laugh rumbled through his massive chest «I will, too, the first chance I get. You first wait and see.»

Chief White Halfoat was a handsome, swarthy Indian from Oklahoma with a heavy, hard-boned face and tousled black hair a half-blooded Creek from Enid who, for occult reasons of his own, had made up his mind to die of pneumonia. He was a glowering, vengeful, disillusioned Indian who hated foreigners with names like Cathcart, Korn, Black and Havermeyer and wished they'd all go back to where their lousy ancestors had come from.

«You wouldn't believe it, Yossarian,» he ruminated, raising his voice deliberately to bait Doc Daneeka, «but this used to be a pretty good country to live in before they loused it up with their goddam piety.»

Chief White Halfoat was out to revenge himself upon the white man. He could barely read or write and had been assigned to Captain Black as assistant intelligence officer.

«How could I learn to read or write?» Chief White Halfoat demanded with simulated belligerence, raising his voice again so that Doc

Daneeka would hear. «Every place we pitched our tent, they sank an oil well. Every time they sank a well, they hit oil. And every time they hit oil, they made us pack up our tent and go someplace else. We were human divining rods. Our whole family had a natural affinity for petroleum deposits, and soon every oil company in the world had technicians chasing us around. We were always on the move. It was one hell of a way to bring a child up, I can tell you. I don't think I ever spent more than a week in one place.»

His earliest memory was of a geologist.

«Every time another While Halfoat was born,» he continued «the stock market turned bullish. Soon whole drilling crews were following us around with all their equipment just to get the jump on each oilier. Companies began to merge just so they could cut down on the number of people they had to assign to us. But the crown in back of us kept growing. We never got a good night's sleep. When we stopped, they stopped. When we moved, they moved, chuckwagons, bulldozers, derricks, generators. We were a walking business boom, and we began to receive invitations from some of the best hotels just for the amount of business we would drag into town with us. Some of those invitations were mighty generous, but we couldn't accept any because we were Indians and all the best hotels that were inviting us wouldn't accept Indians as guests. Racial prejudice is a terrible thing, Yossarian. It really is. It's a terrible thing to treat a decent, loyal Indian like a nigger, kike, wop or spic.» Chief White Halfoat nodded slowly with conviction.

«Then, Yossarian, It finally happened — the beginning of the end. They began to follow us around from in front. They would try to guess where we were going to stop next and would begin drilling before we even got there, so we couldn't even stop. As soon as we'd begin to unroll our blankets, they would kick us off. They had confidence in us. They wouldn't even wait to strike oil before they kicked us off. We were so tired we almost didn't care the day our time ran out. One

morning we found ourselves completely surrounded by oilmen waiting for us to come their way so they could kick us off. Everywhere you looked there was an oilman on a ridge, waiting there like Indians getting ready to attack. It was the end. We couldn't stay where we were because we had just been kicked off. And there was no place left for us to go. Only the Army saved me. Luckily, the war broke out just in the nick of time, and a draft board picked me right up out of the middle and put me down, safely in Lowery Field, Colorado. I was the only survivor.»

Yossarian knew he was lying, but did not interrupt as Chief White Halfoat went on to claim that he had never heard from his parents again. That didn't bother him too much, though, for he had only their word for it that they were his parents, and since they had lied to him about so many other things, they could just as well have been lying to him about that too. He was much better acquainted with the fate of a tribe of first cousins who had wandered away north in a diversionary movement and pushed inadvertently into Canada, When they tried to return, they were stopped at the border by American immigration authorities who would not let them back into the country. They could not come back in because they were red.

It was a horrible joke, but Doc Daneeka didn't laugh until Yossarian came to him one mission later and pleaded again, without any real expectation of success, to be grounded. Doc Daneeka snickered once and was soon immersed in problems of his own, which included Chief White Halfoat, who had been challenging him ail that morning to Indian wrestle, and Yossarian, who decided right then and there to go crazy.

«You're wasting your time,» Doc Daneeka was forced to tell him,

«Can't you ground someone who's crazy?»

«Oh, sure, I have to. There's a rule saying I have to ground anyone who's crazy.»

«Then why don't you ground me? I'm crazy. Ask Clevinger.»

«Clevinger? Where's Clevinger? You find Clevinger and I'll ask him.»

'Then ask any of the others. They'll tell you how crazy I am.»

«They're crazy.»

«Then why don't you ground them?»

«Why don't they ask me to ground them?»

«Because they're crazy, that's why.»

«Of course they're crazy,» Doc Daneeka replied. «I just told you they're crazy, didn't I? And you can't let crazy people decide whether you're crazy or not, can you?»

Yossarian looked at him soberly and tried another approach. «Is Orr crazy?»

«He sure is,» Doc Daneeka said.

«Can you ground him?»

«I sure can. But first he has to ask me to. That's part of the rule.»

«Then why doesn't he ask you to?»

«Because he's crazy.» Doc Daneeka said, «He has to be crazy to keep flying combac missions after all the close calls he's had. Sure, I can ground Orr. But first he has to ask me to.»

«That's all he has to do to be grounded?»

«That's all. Let him ask me.»

«And then you can ground him?» Yossarian asked.

«No. Then I can't ground him.»

«You mean there's a catch?»

«Sure there's a catch,» Doc Daneeka replied. «Catch-22. Anyone who wants to get put of combat duty isn't really crazy.»

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22 which specified that a

concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers chat were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't hare to; but if he didn't want-to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

«That's some catch, that Catch-22,» he observed.

«It's the best there is,» Doc Daneeka agreed.

Yossarian saw it clearly in al its, spinninig reasonableness. There was an elliptical precision about its perfect pairs of parts that was graceful and shocking, like good modern art, and at times Yossarian wasn't quite sure that he saw it all, just the way he was never quite sure about good modern art or about the flies Orr saw in Appleby's eyes. He had Orr's word to take for the flies in Appleby's eyes.

«Oh, they're there, all right,» Orr had assured him about the flies in Appleby's eyes after Yossarian's fist fight with Appleby in the officers' club, «although he probably doesn't even know it. That's why he can't see things as they really are.»

«How come he doesn't know it?» inquired Yossarian.

«Because he's got flies in his eyes,» Orr explained with exaggerated patience, «How can he see he's got flies in his eyes if he's got flies in his eyes?»

It made as much sense as anything else, and Yossarian was wiling to give Orr the benefit of the doubt because Orr was from the wilderness outside New York City and knew so much, more about wildlife than Yossarian did, and because Orr, unlike Yossarian's mother, rather, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, in-law, teacher, spiritual leader, legislator, neighbor and newspaper, had never lied to him about anything crucial

before. Yossarian had mulled his newfound knowledge about Appleby over in private for a day or two and then decided, as a good deed, to pass the word along to Appleby himself.

«Appleby, you've got flies in your eyes,» he whispered helpfully as they passed by each other in the doorway of the parachute tent on the day of the weekly milk run to Parma.

«What?» Appleby responded sharply, thrown into confusion by the fact that Yossarian had spoken to him at all.

«You've got flies in your eyes.» Yossarian repeated. «'That's probably why you can't see them.»

Appleby recreated from Yossarian with a look of loathing bewilderment and sulked in silence until he was is the jeep with Havermeyer riding down the long, straight road to the briefing room, where Major Danby, the fidgeting group operations officer, was waiting to conduct the preliminary briefing with all the lead pilots, bombardiers and navigators. Appleby spoke in a soft voice so that he would not be heard by the driver or by Captain Black, who was stretched out with his eyes closed in the front seat of the jeep.

«Havermeyer,» he asked hesitantly. «Have I got flies in my eyes?»

Havermeyer blinked quizzically, «Sties?» he asked.

«No, flies,» he was cold.

Havermeyer blinked again, «Flies?»

«In my eyes.»

«You must be crazy,» Havermeyer said.

«No, I'm not crazy. Yossarians crazy. Just tell me if I've got flies in my eyes or not. Go ahead. I can take it.»

Havermeyer popped another piece of peanut brittle into his month and peered very closely into Appleby's eyes.»

«I don't see any,» he announced,

Appleby heaved an immense sigh of relief. Havermeyer had tiny bits of peanut brittle adhering to his lips, chin and cheeks.

«You've got peanut brittle crumbs on your face,» Appleby remarked to him.

«I'd rather have peanut brittle crumbs on my face than flies in my eyes,» Havermeyer retorted.

The officers of the other five planes in each flight arrived in trucks for the general briefing that took place thirty minutes later. The three enlisted men in each crew were not briefed at all, but were carried directly out on the airfield to the separate planes in which they were scheduled to fly that day, where they waited around with the ground crew until the officers with whom they had been scheduled to fly swung off the rattling tailgates of the trucks delivering them and it was time to climb aboard and start up. Engines rolled over disgruntledly on lollipop-shaped hardstands, resisting first, then idling smoothly awhile, and then the planes lumbered around and nosed forward lamely over the pebbled ground like sightless, stupid, crippled things until they taxied into the line at the foot of the landing strip and took off swiftly, one behind the other, in a zooming, rising roar, banking slowly into formation over mottled treetops, and circling the field at even, speed until all the flights of six had been formed and then setting course over cerulean water on the first leg of the journey to the tar get in northern Italy or France. The planes gamed altitude steadily and were above nine thousand feat by the time they crossed into enemy territory. One of the surprising things always was the sense of calm and utter silence, broken only by the test rounds fired from the machine guns, by an occasional toneless, terse remark over the intercom, and, at last, by the sobering pronouncement of the bombardier in each plane that they were at the LR and about to turn toward the target. There was always sunshine, always a tiny sticking in the throat from the rarefied air.

The B-25S they flew in were stable dependable, dull-green ships with twin rudders and engines and wide wings. Their single fault, from where Yossarian sat as a bombardier, was the tight crawl way separating the bombardier's compartment in the Plexiglas nose from the nearest escape hatch. The crawlway was a narrow, square, cold tunnel hollowed out beneath the flight controls, and a large man like Yossarian could squeeze through only with difficulty. A chubby, moon-faced navigator with little reptilian eyes and a pipe like Aarfy's had trouble, too, and Yossarian used to chase him back from the nose as they turned toward the target, now minutes away. There was a time of tension then, a time of waiting with nothing to hear and nothing to see and nothing to do but wait as the antiaircraft guns below took aim and made ready to knock them all sprawling into infinite sleep if they could.

The crawlway was Yossarian's lifeline to outside from a plane about to fall, but Yossarian swore at it with seething antagonism, reviled it as an obstacle put there by providence as part of the plot that would destroy him. There was room for an additional escape hatch right there in the nose of a B-25, but there was no escape hatch. Instead there was the crawlway, and since the mess on the mission over Avignon he had learned to detest every mammoth inch of it, for it slung him seconds and seconds away from Ms parachute, which was coo bulky to be taken up front with him, and seconds and seconds more after that away from the escape hatch on the floor between the rear of the elevated flight deck and the feet of the faceless top turret gunner mounted high above. Yossarian longed to be where Aarfy could be once Yossarian had chased him back from the nose; Yossarian longed to sit on the floor in a huddled ball right on top of the escape hatch inside a sheltering igloo of extra flak suits that he would have been happy to carry along with him, his parachute already hooked to his harness where it belonged, one fist clenching the red-handled rip cord, one fist gripping the emergency hatch release that would spill him earthward into air at the first dreadful squeal of destruction. That was

where he wanted to be if he bad to he there at all, instead of hung out there in front like some goddam cantilevered goldfish in some goddam cantilevered goldfish bowl while the goddam foul black tiers of flak were bursting and booming and billowing all around and above and below him in a climbing, cracking, staggered, banging, phantasmagorical, cosmological wickedness that jarred and tossed and shivered, clattered and pierced, and threatened to annihilate them all in one splinter of a second in one vast flash of fire.

Aarfy had been no use to Yossarian as a navigator or as anything else, and Yossarian drove him back from the nose vehemently each time so that they would not clutter up each other's way if they had to scramble suddenly for safety. Once Yossarian had driven him back from the nose, Aarfy was free to cower on the floor where Yossarian longed to cower, but he stood bolt upright instead with his stumpy arms resting comfortably on the backs of the pilot's and co-pilot's seats, pipe in hand, making affable small talk to McWatt and whoever happened to be co-pilot and pointing out amusing trivia in the sky to the two men, who were too busy to be interested. McWatt was too busy responding at the controls to Yossarian's strident instructions as Yossarian slipped the plane in on the bomb run and then whipped them all away violently around the ravenous pillars of exploding shells with curt, shrill, obscene commands to McWatt that were much like the anguished, entreating nightmare yelpings of Hungry Joe in the dark. Aarfy would puff reflectively on his pipe throughout the whole chaotic clash, gazing with unruffled curiosity at the war through McWatt's window as though it were a remote disturbance that could not affect him. Aarfy was a dedicated fraternity man who loved cheerleading and class reunions and did not have brains enough to be afraid, Yossarian did have brains enough and was, and the only thing that stopped him from abandoning his post under lire and scurrying back through the crawlway like a yellow-bellied rat was his unwillingness to entrust the evasive action out of the target area to anybody else. There was nobody

else in the world he would honor with so great a responsibility. There was nobody else he knew who was as big a coward. Yossarian was the best man in the group at evasive action, but had no idea why.

There was no established procedure for evasive action. All you needed was fear, and Yossarian had plenty of that, more fear than Orr or Hungry Joe, more fear even than Dunbar, who had resigned himself submissively to the idea that he must die someday. Yossarian had not resigned himself to that idea, and he bolted for his lift wildly on each mission the instant his bombs were away, hollering, *«Hard, bard, hard, bard, you bastard, hard!»* at McWatt and hating McWatt viciously all the time as though McWatt were to blame for their being up there at all to be rubbed out by strangers, and everybody else in the plane kept off the intercom, except for the pitiful the of the mess on the mission to Avignon when: Dobbs went crazy in mid-air and began weeping pathetically for help.

«Help him, help him,» Dobbs sobbed. «Help him, help him.»

«Help who? Help who?» called back Yossarian, once he had plugged his headset back into the intercom system, after it had been jerked out when Dobbs wrested the controls away from Huple and hurled them all down suddenly into the deafening, paralyzing, horrifying dive which had plastered Yossarian helplessly to the ceiling of the plane by the top of his head and from which Huple had. rescued them just in time by seizing the controls back from Dobbs and leveling the ship out almost as suddenly right back in the middle of the buffeting layer of cacophonous flak from winch they had escaped successfully only a moment before. *Oh, God! Oh, God, oh, God,* Yossarian had been pleading wordlessly as he dangled from the ceiling of the nose of the ship by the top of his head, unable to move.

«The bombardier, the bombardier,» Dobbs answered in a cry when Yossarian spoke. «He doesn't answer, he doesn't answer. Help the bombardier, help the bombardier.»

«I'm the bombardier,» Yossarian cried back at him. «I'm the bombardier. I'm all right. I'm all right.»

«Then help him, help him,» Dobbs begged, «Help him, help him.»

And Snowden lay dying in back.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Summarize the main ideas of the chapter.
2. Discuss Halfoat? What does he mean by saying that the oil companies used them as «human dividing rods.»? What role does Doc Daneeka play? What are the functions of Clevinger, Dobbs, Orr, Appleby, and Havermeyer in the book?
3. Think about the novel's use of setting and scene? What are themes, motifs and symbols of the novel? What is the general tone of the chapter? Does it change throughout the narration?
4. How does the disordered, tangential presentation of events affect the flow of the story? What devices does Heller employ to allow the reader to piece together the order of events?
5. Comment on: «There was only one catch and that was Catch-22 which specified that a concern for one's own safety ...was the process of a rational mind.»
6. How important is the number of missions the men are expected to fly to understand the conflict of the novel?
7. What is the greatest irony of Yossarian's situation? What does it make you think about?
8. What does Snowden's death mean to Yossarian?
9. Throughout the novel, the idea of Catch-22 is explained in a number of ways. Are they all examples of a larger abstract idea? If Catch-22 is an abstract concept, which explanation comes closest to it?

10. What role does the failure of communication play in the development of Heller's paradoxes? Give examples of irony, allusions to future events, misinterpreted words, absurd conclusions and explain their effect. Discuss the power of language in the novel.
11. What is one of the main goals of Catch-22? What are the political and ethical implications of the war? What is your general felling about the novel? Is the novel essentially ironic or tragic, or is some other term necessary to define it?

Chapter analysis
by Tatiana Shabrova (group 501)

The excerpt under analysis is entitled «Chief White Halfoat». It is taken from the famous novel «Catch-22» by an American novelist and dramatist Joseph Heller (1923—1999). He began his writing career as the author of short stories. During World War II he served in the US Air Forces as a bombardier in Italy and flew 60 missions. These experiences later became the basis for the novel «Catch-22» (it was published in 1961).

The novel is told in the third person narration. Most of all we see the events through the eyes of Yossarian, the protagonist of the story. We can actually sometimes feel Heller's thoughts through Yossarian. The novel takes place during World War II in an American Army camp on the island of Pianosa. The general tone of the chapter and of the novel on the whole is satirical. «Catch-22» satirizes the horrors of war and the power of modern society, especially of bureaucratic institutions that destroy the human spirit.

The chapter «Chief White Halfoat» can be subdivided into 3 parts: Doc Daneeka, Chief White Halfoat and the accident with B-25.

Doc Daneeka is a flight surgeon. Before he was drafted he had his own

medical practice. His goal was to make it a successful business. At first the war was a godsend for him, as most of the doctors in his district were in the service. But he was also drafted. When he was drafted his main goal was to get through the war alive. His friend is the protagonist of the novel Yossarian. In this chapter Yossarian pleads for grounding, although without any real expectations of success. Doc Daneeka becomes the first to detail the structured frameworking of what is formally known as «Catch-22». This law «Catch-22» is paradoxical: it means that the sane cannot be excused from combat duty, and yet, one is automatically considered sane if one requests to be excused.

Doc Daneeka is forced to share a tent with Chief White Halfoaf, whom he hates. Chief Halfoat is obsessed that he will die soon of pneumonia. Halfoat was American Indian. He is described as a handsome, swarthy fellow. Before he was drafted into US Army Air Forces Halfoat lived in several states. Anywhere his family and he went, oil was found. Soon every major oil company in the USA was following them. Any time they tried to settle down, they were moved away because oil had been discovered. His family and he were «human diving rods». So, for Chief White Halfoatwar was a bless, he was drafted just in the nick of time.

As for the main character Yossarian, in this chapter we find the episode with the B-25 where Yossarian sat as a bombardier. The single fault of B-25, as Yossarian states, was the tight crawling separating the bombardier's compartment from the nearest escape catch. The crawling was so narrow that he would have problems while squeezing through it. The paradox was that there was a room for additional escape hatch right there in the nose of B-25, but there was no escape hatch.

At the end of the chapter we see one of the reminiscences. Yossarian recollected the episode of Snowdan's death. Snowdan's death follow him throughout the novel.

Catch-22 is, among the other things, a general critic of bureaucratic operation and reasoning. As a result of its specific use in the book the

phrase Catch-22 has come into use to mean a no-win situation. The dark humor of Yossarian situation stems from the fact that Yossarian can't get out of flying missions due to insanity.

I think the novel «Catch-22» is a real masterpiece of the 20th century. This Catch-22 that doesn't even exist in reality, but exists in people's mind can be found even in our times, in our society, when bureaucratic laws are no more than a paradox in itself. As Heller wrote, he focused his attention mainly not on the war itself but on the relationship.

Analysis
by Yelena Shapovalova (group 501)

The story under analysis is an excerpt from «Catch-22». It belongs to the pen of J. Heller, an American writer. This is a war novel; it describes the events of World War II. J. Heller himself took part in the war. He experienced those incidents that are described in the novel. He began to write Catch-22 in 1953, but it was not published until 8 years later. Heller wrote several other novels, memories and plays.

The novel belongs to the third person narration, though the narrator is not mentioned here. He describes events, characteristics, etc., focusing on what the protagonist feels. The excerpt highlights the stories of three people: Doc Daneeka, Yossarian and Chief White Halfoat. Their lives were affected by the war.

Doc Daneeka had had his private practice in the USA. But then war burnt out and he was drafted to the army. Doctor was sorry that he was taken out of his practice. It was a tragedy for him that his medical practice back home was dying while he was away at war. He refused to help ground the pilots who didn't want to fly anymore because he didn't want to get in trouble. He was obliged to treat his patients in accordance to Catch-22 which didn't really exist.

Doc Daneeka shared a tent with Chief White Halfoat, a native American («half-blooded creek») from Oklahoma who never learned to read or write because his family was always on the move. Wherever the family located, oil was discovered; as the petroleum companies moved in the Halfoats were forced out. The chief claims he is the sole survivor of his Native American tribe, which was wiped out by white men greedy for oil. He is convinced that is destined to die of pneumonia.

Captain John Yossarian is the protagonist of the novel. He is a bombardier in the Army. Catch-22 keeps him, as other pilots, at war, but his character is different from others. Yossarian doesn't care about the war, he doesn't want to risk his life. Yossarian's group is forced to fly more missions than any other group and he tries to get out of flying because he is afraid of dying. All the other pilots think he is insane and they do not understand why he believes that people are trying to kill him.

Chapter 5 is one of the most important in the novel because it is here that we find the standard explanation of Catch-22. Yossarian is trying to understand why his friend Doc Daneeka won't ground anyone. «There was only one catch», the narrator tells the reader, «... and that was Catch-22». The novel later suggests other aspects of Catch-22, but this is its prime example: Orr can be grounded if he is crazy; but if he wants to be grounded, he must be sane. Catch-22 is then a mysterious regulation that traps its victims in a web. Basically, if there is a rule, there is always an exception for it. For instance, Catch-22 says that no one is allowed to read Catch-22. It always creates circumstances where, when things look fine, Catch-22 appears and ruins everything.

Heller extends his sardonic approach to «military intelligence». Chief White Halfoat is unable to read or write; therefore he is placed to military intelligence. When war broke out, the Chief found his home in the Army Air Forces as an assistant intelligence officer. The usage of military terms enhances the realistic sounding of the story. For instance, «the B-255 they flew in were stable, dependable, dull-green ships with twin rudders and engines and wide wings», also «bombardier's compartment», «escape hatch» etc.

The author uses alliteration to depict the flight: «...the goddamn foul black tiers of flak were bursting and booming and billowing all around and above...», epithets: «...in a climbing, cracking, staggered banging, phantasmagorical, cosmological wickedness...» The reader feels as if he is present in the scene, takes part in it.

Throughout the text the author employs satire and paradox.

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller is a critic of society we live in. Whoever is proud of what we have advanced to, and is unwilling to look at it in a negative light, would find this book very subversive. It threatens and criticizes the way of living of most who pride themselves in living a modern life. Through the ridiculousness of war Heller shows how misguided much of modern society has become, in spite of all the so called civilized advancement.

Analysis
by Kirill Egiptsev (group 503)

The author of the novel «Catch-22» is Joseph Heller. This is an enjoyable and clever novel, I found it rather eccentric. The theme of the novel is hard to define, probably it's about professional relations between people and the main topic is the illogical and absurd situations (such as Catch-22) reflecting throughout the narration. The narration is told in the third person, from the vantage point of an omniscient narrator with numerous flash-backs and complicated time organisation. The general tone of the chapter is humorous. The scene is laid in a tent that the characters of the novel Doc Daneeka and an alcoholic Native American Chief White Halfoat share. The main characters are Yossarian, Doc Daneeka, Chief White Halfoat and Orr. Their description is presented mainly through their talk and reflected in the language they speak. If we consider this chapter a short story, in the exposition Doc Daneeka describes his corrupt medical practice to Yossarian. He tells him about some sexu-

ally inept newlyweds who once visited him. By constant attempts of characters to ask what was meant the reader gets an impression of a hardly understandable conversation and its topic. Such sentences as «What newlyweds?», «What virgin?», «He did what?» testify this. Also the reader is somewhat amused by these questions and questions like «Who's Saint Anthony?» speaking of simple matters. Yossarian pleads with Doc Daneeka to be grounded asking if he would be grounded if he were crazy. Doc Daneeka replies that he would and Yossarian argues that he's indeed crazy. Doc Daneeka then describes Catch-22, a regulation holding that in order to be grounded for insanity a pilot must ask to be grounded, but any pilot who asks to be grounded must be sane because some people would never fly bombing missions. This talk contains short sentences which create an image of a rapid, absurd in its simplicity conversation. The interlocutors seem to pick on and tease each other and what's more, sometimes the utterances are quite ironic, e. g. «Just tell me I've got flies in my eyes or not. Go ahead. I can take it.» Yossarian begins thinking about bombing missions and how much he hates his position in the nose of the plane. As we learn more about Yossarian's world, we see that military bureaucracy has taken the communicative power out of his language. As Snowden dies in the back of the plane, all that Yossarian can think of to say is «there, there», over and over. Language here seems to be the representation of the absurdity of circumstances. Catch-22 itself is nothing but a bunch of words strung together to trap logic and keep Yossarian flying missions! Catch-22 contains a clause that makes it illegal to read Catch-22, demonstrating how absolutely powerful this concept is. And Yossarian can't but accept the illogical prison in which these words place him. The contrast between the actual fighting and the ridiculous bureaucracy that controls it is one of the most horrifying aspects of Catch-22. Even the notion of time is affected by the absurdity. The story is told with a jumbled chronology involving recollections, allusions to future events and unclear statements. The narrative skips from scene to scene. In conclusion I'd like to say that the general idea of the novel is the great contrast between war goals and

soldiers' desires just to be back home and in general it stresses the uselessness of war.

Commentary
by Olga Rudak (group 505)

The work under interpretation is written by Joseph Heller, an outstanding American writer of the 2nd half of the 20th c4entury. J. Heller was born in Brooklyn in 1923. He served as an Air Force bombardier in World War II and was a writer and a teacher afterwards. His first novel Catch-22 is the most famous and capturing one.

The work is the reflection of the author's Air Force experience and presents a war story that is at the same time paradoxical, cynical and stirring.

The author presents three main themes:

- *— the absolute power of bureaucracy*
- *— the importance of language*
- *— the inevitability of death.*

The first theme is revealed through the fact that lives and deaths of soldiers in Yossarians's, the protagonist of the novel, squadron are governed not by their choice and decisions but by impersonal, frightening bureaucracy. The bureaucrats are absolutely deaf to logical reasoning that common soldiers try to use to confirm them in uselessness of war.

The second theme is the importance of language, the meaning of the combination of words ***Catch-22,*** *the law allowing men to be discharged from military service on the ground of their insanity. These words turn into the illogical prison leaving Yossarian and his soldiers no choice and no way out.*

The third theme is the inevitability of death. Yossarian who has seen deaths of friends realizes quite well how fragile people are. His only aim

and sense of life is to stay alive. And though he is constantly visualizing various ways of dying he tries to appreciate every moment of precious life.

The novel is told as a serious of loosely related stories in no particular chronological order. The only motif that unites them is the idea of Catch-22 that is the force keeping Yossarian flying combat missions.

The opening scene of the chapter is the conversation between Doc Daneeka, the medical officer, and Yossarian about some sexually inept newlyweds who once visited his office. The scene is laid in a tent which Doc Daneeka shares with an alcoholic native American, named Chief Halfoat. The latter presents the story of his family.

Because every place that his family settled turned out to be an important oil supply oil companies began following them, using them as «human divining rods» and depriving them of stable life and education. Again here the author underlines the absolute power of authorities which do not care for the people's standard of living — they think only of their income.

The crucial moment of the chapter is the episode when Yossarian pleads Doc Daneeka to ground him crazy. Here for the first time the medical officer describes Catch-22, a law meaning that in order to be grounded for insanity a pilot must ask to be grounded, but any pilot who asks to be grounded must be sane since sane people would never want to fly bombing missions. Yossarian takes Doc Daneeka's word for it just as he had taken Orr's words about the flies in Appleby's eyes. He believes him as Orr had never lied to him before.

All these paradoxical situations lead to the following. Yossarian begins thinking about bombing missions and how much he hates his position in the nose of the plane where he is separated from the escape hatch by a passage, just wide enough to fit through. On these bombing missions Yossarian is always afraid for his life and he pleads the pilot Mc Watt to avoid antiaircraft fire. He remembers one mission when the squadron

was taking evasive action and the pilot went crazy. The plane went out of control and Yossarian was on the verge of death.

The story under interpretation is a narration. But the narrator is not clearly revealed — he is implied. We get acquainted with the main events through the thoughts of Yossarian, Chief Halfoat and Doc Daneeka. And Yossarian serves as a mouthpiece of Joseph Heller himself. It is his irony that sounds in Yossarian's words about bureaucracy and war.

The tone of the chapter on the whole can be described as depressing and serious. In spite of the seemingly absurd dialogues and absolutely unconnected events, the contrast between the actual fighting and the ridiculous bureaucracy that controls it is clearly seen.

As for the cast of characters of the chapter, first of all, we should mention the principle ones.

The protagonist of the novel is Yossarian — a captain in the Air Force and a lead bombardier in the squadron. But he hates the war. His powerful desire to live has led him to the conclusion that millions of people are trying to kill him. Yossarian is not a typical hero, he does not risk his life to save others, on the contrary, in this illogical prison of Catch-22 he tries to avoid death because in such conditions the only heroism is self-preservation. His inner conflict, as well as the major conflict of the chapter, is the clash of instincts of self-preservation and anxiousness about his soldiers' lives.

Another character shown as round and thinking is Doc Daneeka. He is the medical officer who feels sorry for himself because the war deprived him of his profitable private practice in the USA. His mission in the novel is to explain the meaning of Catch-22 to Yossarian.

Chief Halfoat (the name in the title of the chapter) is depicted as the victim of this bureaucratic system but whose attitude towards war is a bit different. He considers that war has saved him — it was the only way for him to realize himself in life.

The minor characters —all the soldiers of the Air Force squadron — are introduced just to show the scale of war and a great amount of broken lives.

As for the style and language of the chapter, first of all Joseph Heller is famous for his paradoxes and the main one is Catch-22 itself — real values are changed into nonsense. The failure of communication plays an important role in the development of these paradoxes. Words have little meaning: as everybody is trying to be grounded crazy behavior of the characters is devoid of any logic and sense. For example, Yossarian notices that Appleby has got flies in his eyes and the situation is given unnecessary attention. This is the grotesque that the author uses to create satire.

The failure of communication is also revealed through periodical repetition. For instance, in the episode with newlyweds Doc Daneeka tries to make fun of the medal of St Anthony hanging round the girl's neck. His words are as if not heard at all, he is not understandable as well as Appleby talking about flies in the eyes. Words in this world really mean nothing because they cannot help in solving the paradox of Catch-22.

Finally, the characteristic of the novel is a jumbled chronological order which is discovered through recollections and allusions to future events, there is no word «now», only «before»and «after».

In conclusion we may say that one of the main goals of Catch-22 is to satirize the dehumanizing machinery of war by showing the instinct to survive in the heart of every individual. By ridiculing war time situations and by carrying arguments to absurd conclusions the novel shows the conflict arising between war and bureaucracy, on the one hand, and ordinary people, on the other.

3.5. Khaled Hosseini. The Kite Runner

The Kite Runner is a profound work of literature that offers a vivid picture of Afghanistan, its people and Afghan culture. Hosseini, now a doctor in California, is the only Afghan author writing in English. In his first novel through his characters and startling plot Hosseini shows how childhood choices affect our adult lives. It's an account of family and friendship, betrayal and salvation, love, honor, guilt, fear, redemption and happiness.

RAYMOND ANDREWS was a short fellow with small hands, nails perfectly trimmed, wedding band on the ring finger. He gave me a curt little shake; it felt like squeezing a sparrow. *Those are the hands that hold our fates,* I thought as Sohrab and I seated ourselves across from his desk. A *Les Miserables* poster was nailed to the wall behind Andrews next to a topographical map of the U. S. A pot of tomato plants basked in the sun on the windowsill.

«Smoke?» he asked, his voice a deep baritone that was at odds with his slight stature.

«No thanks,» I said, not caring at all for the way Andrews's eyes barely gave Sohrab a glance, or the way he didn't look at me when he spoke. He pulled open a desk drawer and lit a cigarette from a half-empty pack. He also produced a bottle of lotion from the same drawer. He looked at his tomato plants as he rubbed lotion into his hands, cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth. Then he closed the drawer, put his elbows on the desktop, and exhaled. «So,» he said, crinkling his gray eyes against the smoke, «tell me your story.»

I felt like Jean Valjean sitting across from Javert. I reminded myself that I was on American soil now, that this guy was on my side, that he got paid for helping people like me. «I want to adopt this boy, take him back to the States with me,» I said.

«Tell me your story,» he repeated, crushing a flake of ash on the neatly arranged desk with his index finger, flicking it into the trash can.

I gave him the version I had worked out in my head since I'd hung up with Soraya. I had gone into Afghanistan to bring back my half brother's son. I had found the boy in squalid conditions, wasting away in an orphanage. I had paid the orphanage director a sum of money and withdrawn the boy. Then I had brought him to Pakistan.

«You are the boy's half uncle?»

«Yes.»

He checked his watch. Leaned and turned the tomato plants on the sill. «Know anyone who can attest to that?»

«Yes, but I don't know where he is now.»

He turned to me and nodded. I tried to read his face and couldn't. I wondered if he'd ever tried those little hands of his at poker.

«I assume getting your jaws wired isn't the latest fashion statement,» he said. We were in trouble, Sohrab and I, and I knew it then. I told him I'd gotten mugged in Peshawar.

«Of course,» he said. Cleared his throat. «Are you Muslim?»

«Yes.»

«Practicing?»

«Yes.» In truth, I didn't remember the last time I had laid my forehead to the ground in prayer. Then I did remember: the day Dr. Amani gave Baba his prognosis. I had kneeled on the prayer rug, remembering only fragments of verses I had learned in school.

«Helps your case some, but not much,» he said, scratching a spot on the flawless part in his sandy hair.

«What do you mean?» I asked. I reached for Sohrab's hand, intertwined my fingers with his. Sohrab looked uncertainly from me to Andrews.

«There's a long answer and I'm sure I'll end up giving it to you. You want the short one first?»

«I guess,» I said.

Andrews crushed his cigarette, his lips pursed. «Give it up.»

«I'm sorry?»

«Your petition to adopt this young fellow. Give it up. That's my advice to you.»

«Duly noted,» I said. «Now, perhaps you'll tell me why.»

«That means you want the long answer,» he said, his voice impassive, not reacting at all to my curt tone. He pressed his hands palm to palm, as if he were kneeling before the Virgin Mary. «Let's assume the story you gave me is true, though I'd bet my pension a good deal of it is either fabricated or omitted. Not that I care, mind you. You're here, he's here, that's all that matters. Even so, your petition faces significant obstacles, not the least of which is that this child is not an orphan.»

«Of course he is.»

«Not legally he isn't.»

«His parents were executed in the street. The neighbors saw it,» I said, glad we were speaking in English.

«You have death certificates?»

«Death certificates? This is Afghanistan we're talking about. Most people there don't have *birth* certificates.»

His glassy eyes didn't so much as blink. «I don't make the laws, sir. Your outrage notwithstanding, you still need to prove the parents are deceased. The boy has to be declared a legal orphan.»

«But —»

«You wanted the long answer and I'm giving it to you. Your next problem is that you need the cooperation of the child's country of origin. Now, that's difficult under the best of circumstances, and, to quote

you, this *is* Afghanistan we're talking about. We don't have an American embassy in Kabul. That makes things extremely complicated. Just about impossible.»

«What are you saying, that I should throw him back on the streets?» I said.

«I didn't say that.»

«He was sexually abused,» I said, thinking of the bells around Sohrab's ankles, the mascara on his eyes.

«I'm sorry to hear that,» Andrews's mouth said. The way he was looking at me, though, we might as well have been talking about the weather. «But that is not going to make the INS issue this young fellow a visa.»

«What are you saying?»

«I'm saying that if you want to help, send money to a reputable relief organization. Volunteer at a refugee camp. But at this point in time, we strongly discourage U. S. citizens from attempting to adopt Afghan children.»

I got up. «Come on, Sohrab,» I said in Farsi. Sohrab slid next to me, rested his head on my hip. I remembered the Polaroid of him and Hassan standing that same way. «Can I ask you something, Mr. Andrews?»

«Yes.»

«Do you have children?»

For the first time, he blinked.

«Well, do you? It's a simple question.»

He was silent.

«I thought so,» I said, taking Sohrab's hand. «They ought to put someone in your chair who knows what it's like to want a child.» I turned to go, Sohrab trailing me.

«Can I ask *you* a question?» Andrews called.

«Go ahead.»

«Have you promised this child you'll take him with you?»

«What if I have?»

He shook his head. «It's a dangerous business, making promises to kids.» He sighed and opened his desk drawer again. «You mean to pursue this?» he said, rummaging through papers.

«I mean to pursue this.»

He produced a business card. «Then I advise you to get a good immigration lawyer. Omar Faisal works here in Islamabad. You can tell him I sent you.»

I took the card from him. «Thanks,» I muttered.

«Good luck,» he said. As we exited the room, I glanced over my shoulder. Andrews was standing in a rectangle of sunlight absently staring out the window, his hands turning the potted tomato plants toward the sun, petting them lovingly.

«TAKE CARE,» the secretary said as we passed her desk.

«Your boss could use some manners,» I said. I expected her to roll her eyes, maybe nod in that «I know, everybody says that,» kind of way. Instead, she lowered her voice. «Poor Ray. He hasn't been the same since his daughter died.»

I raised an eyebrow.

«Suicide,» she whispered. (p. 328—332)

Analysis
by Natalia Sandalova (group 503)

The extract under consideration belongs to the pen of an Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini. This extract is a chapter from a renowned book of his entitled «The Kite Runner.»

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in 1965. When the war broke out his family sought political asylum in the USA, they made their residence in California, where Khaled entered the university and earned a degree in biology. Later on in 1993 he received a degree of Doctor of Medicine. Hosseini's memories of the peaceful pre-soviet era Afghanistan as well as his personal experience with Afghan hazards led to the writing of his first novel, «The Kite Runner». The novel deals with the fates of people, written and described on the background of the terrible war, where there is no mercy to children, women, those who were not capable of defending themselves, their lives were being broken.

The conflict of the story is a representation of a confrontation of war and people who want no war. The two main characters, representing the parties of the conflict are Raymond Andrews, the immigration officer, and the narrator, the half-uncle of Sohrab, a small boy, who's already seen all the tragedies of the war. The scene is laid in the office of Andrews, where the narrator and Sohrab came to settle the problem of immigration to the USA. We can clearly see the contrast in the description of Andrew's office. We see two pictures, nailed to the wall behind. They are «Les Miserables» poster, and the map of the USA. Thus we see the two symbols — the symbol of war and the symbol of peace. Raymond Andrews is described as a rough and rather austere person, but we can't help feeling affection to him, as he seems to be a strong man, brave and competent in his work. He is a good psychologist, and he possesses a very strong will and patience. Not everyone, I presume, got the permis-

sion to leave Afghan, so he had to see lots of tragedies and details every day, his life is full of mystery, that made him the «iron man», but it didn't make him a misanthrope. Andrews tried hard to help the narrow and the poor boy, he is sincere with the. Here, in his words we see all the world of Afghan being a symbol of war and the whole set of events, thus the author employs repetition and also emphasises the words, making them italicized «this is Afghanistan, we are talking about». We also can clearly see the repetition of words «give it up», showing again the inevitability of getting into a maze of war. Throughout the chapter we see numerous elliptical constructions and nominative absolute complexes, lacking verbs, for example, such sentences as «volunteer as a refugee camp, «nails perfectly trimmed, wedding band on the ring finger.» «He looked at his tomato plants as he rubbed lotion into his hands, cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth.» The author employs these sentences to show the stativeness, immobility of war, to show that it's dragging out and no one wants it to continue, but there is no way out of this. The above-mentioned tomato plant is pointed out as a symbol of life and love. Later on, in the very end, the narrator came to know that Andrews had lost his daughter, so that was the reason of his external coldness and silence in response to the question asked to Andrews if he had children. At this moment the narrator saw Andrews «absently starting out the window, his hands turning the potted tomato plant toward the sun.» We sympathize with this strong and loving man, whose daughter had committed suicide, not being able to stand the hardships of the war. We see that this man's heart is in pain, the fate has taken away someone he loved, so he's no one to love, and no one to care for, just those tomato plants. They became his only companions, as petting them helps at least to fill the emptiness in his heart and ease the pain.

On the whole, in spite of the fact, that the extract under consideration is just a chapter from the novel, we can call it a ready-made story, possessing an introduction, an entanglement and a climax, being in the very end of the story, when the narrator learns about Andrews' daughter sui-

cide. Placing the climax in the very end of the story in the very end of the chapter made us feel the force of the main hero and the losses of people at war. Such an ending is very powerful and impressive and it makes us understand the absurdity of war. I'd say this extract is very powerful, absorbing and gripping. One can't help sympathizing with people, who has been involved involuntary in the war. We can't help sympathizing with the narrator who really loves his half-nephew, we can't help sharing the hardships of a child, a boy, who in his early age had to suffer so many tragedies depriving him of his childhood, and we can't help feeling for Andrews, who was really a strong person, with a loving heart, broken by the war.

3.6. Barbara Kingsolver «The Bean Trees»

Barbara Kingsolver has nine published works, including five novels, the most popular/critically acclaimed of which is *The Poisonwood Bible*. She grew up in Kentucky, earned a graduate degree in biology, is married to Steven Hopp and has two daughters. She lives in Tucson, Arizona, and also owns a farm in southern Appalachia.

<...> «You seem like a very kind person,» I said, «so I'm not going to beat around the bush. I've got a big problem. I can't really afford to pay for a room, and I wouldn't even bother you except I've got a child out in that car that's wet and cold and looking to catch pneumonia if I don't get it to bed someplace warm.»

She looked out toward the car and shook her head, but of course I couldn't tell what that meant. She said, «Well, honey, I don't know.»

«I»ll take anything you've got, and I'll clean up after myself, and tomorrow morning I'll change every bed in this place. Or anything else

you want me to do. It's just for one night.»

«Well,» she said, «I don't know.»

«Let me go get the baby,» I said. «You won't mind if I just bring the poor kid in here to warm up while you decide.»

The most amazing thing was the way that child held on. From the first moment I picked it up out of its nest of wet blanket, it attached itself to me by its little hands like roots sucking on dry dirt. I think it would have been easier to separate me from my hair.

It's probably a good thing. I was so tired, and of course I was not in the habit anyway of remembering every minute where I had put down a child, and 1 think if it had not been stuck to me I might have lost it while I was messing with the car and moving stuff into the little end room of the Broken Arrow. As it was, I just ended up carrying it back and forth a lot. It's like the specimens back at the hospital, I told myself. You just have to keep track. It looked like carrying blood and pee was to be my lot in life.

Once we were moved in I spread the blanket over a chair to dry and ran a few inches of warm water in the tub. «First order of business,» i said, «is to get you a bath. Well work out the rest tomorrow.» I remembered the time I had found a puppy and wanted to keep it, but first Mama made me spend thirty-five cents a word to run an ad in the paper. «What if it was yours?» she had said. «Think how bad you'd want it back.» The ad I wrote said: FOUND PUPPY, BROWN SPOTS, NEAR FLOYD'S MILL ROAD. I had resented how Floyd's Mill Road was three whore words, a dollar and five cents.

I thought to myself, I'd pay a hundred and five to get this one back to its rightful owner. But what kind of ad would you run to find out if anybody had lost an Indian child?

All of the baby's clothes were way too big, with sleeves rolled up and shirt tails wrapped around, and everything wet as mud boots and as hard to get off. There was a bruise twice the size of my thumb on its

inner arm. I threw the soggy shirt in the sink to soak. The child's hands constantly caught my fingers and wouldn't let go. «You little booger,» I said, shaking my ringer and the little fist. «You're like a mud turtle. If a mud turtle bites you, it won't let go till it thunders.» 1 hadn't any sooner gotten the hands pried loose from my fingers before they grabbed onto my shirt sleeves and my hair. When I pulled off the pants and the diapers there were more bruises.

Bruises and worse.

The Indian child was a girl. A girl, poor thing. That fact had already burdened her short life with a kind of misery I could not imagine. 1 thought I knew about every ugly thing that one person does to another, but 1 had never even thought about such things being done to a baby girl. She sat quietly in the bathtub watching me and I just prayed she had enough backbone not to fall over and drown, because 1 had to let her go. I doubled up on the floor at the base of the toilet and tried not to throw up. The floor was linoleum in a pattern that looked like rubber bricks set in mortar. Nothing, not Newt Hardbine or anything else I had ever seen, had made me feel like this.

The kid was splashing like a toad frog. Her fingers were wiggling and slapping at the surface of the water, no doubt trying to grab hold of something. «Here,» I said, and handed her a washcloth that had BROKEN ARROW written on the selvage in indelible magic marker. She hugged that wash cloth and smiled. I swear to God.

After I washed and dried her I put her to bed in a T-shirt that one of Mama's people had brought me one summer from Kentucky Lake. It was tight on me, and said DAMN I'M GOOD. I am skinny and flat-chested like a model, and always looked great in that T-shirt if I say so myself. It was turquoise with red letters, and came down past the baby's knees. 'These are good colors,» I said, trying to pull it over her sleepy, bobbing head. «Indian colors.» Finally her hands were empty and relaxed. She was asleep.

I took out the stamps I had brought from home wrapped in waxed paper, and licked one and stuck it on my souvenir postcard from the Cherokee Nation. I added a line at the bottom:

«I found my head rights, Mama. They're coming with me.»

Analysis
by Anna Syubayeva`s (group 501)

The passage I'm going to analyse is taken from the novel «The Bean Trees» which belongs to the pen of Barbara Kingsolver, a famous American fiction writer. She was interested in social problems described in many of her works.

So, this portion contains the information about a young woman who was given a package which was a baby, a poor Indian girl. The problem here is a young woman's decision what to do with the child, whether to leave it or to take it, and what to do next? To tell the truth, it is rather a difficult question, it presents the so-called blend of moral, phycological, and social problems. She was a woman, yes, a strong one. But, nevertheless, she was afraid, she was shocked. Well, first she asked a mistress of the motel «Broken Arrows» to let her stay in the room for a night without paying, just in order not to let the baby «die of pneumonia, to get her to bed someplace warm.» So, the girl was saved, she took a bath and got an opportunity to sleep in a warm place. The writer of the story tried to express the idea, the difficulty of the choice and the kindness of the woman.

So, the passage is organised in a logical way. It is structured as several topics, concerning different items. The portion begins with the dialogue which showed the way the woman asked for a room to stay at. Then comes the topic of her reminiscences, she remembered the puppy she had found and asked her mother to let her keep it, but mother insisted

on writing an ad in the paper first. Then, the topic of the child's taking a bath and going to bed and the woman's thought.

Well, the story is told by the woman herself, it is written in the first person narration. It means that it is told by a person actually involved in the narrative. The author and the woman have an equal attitude towards the theme, the problem people can come across and the way they choose to solve it. Well, the tone can approve of this thing, it is rather serious, and the nervousness is felt in the mood here.

As for the main character here, the woman, her personality is not directly revealed; it can be understood through her actions, her deeds. We see that she was a very kind person, not just by words. Because, not every woman can repeat such actions, not every woman can take a child, having no idea if it has problems with the health or something else. She even didn't have money to pay for a room. But nevertheless she took the child and tried to help her. You never know what kind of parents the child had. Our genes can play a very significant role in the life of our children, and the woman had no ideas what parents the girl had.

Well, as for the language of the extract it is rather informal; it is easy to read and to understand every word here. In order to reveal the problem of the story, the author used some express means. The repetition of the phrase «I don't know» which was the answer to the woman's request to let her stay in the room showed how determined she was in comparison with the lady who couldn't give an exact answer. In the description of the child's way to hold on we come across some interesting phrases: «I picked it up out of its nest of wet blanket», the metaphor; «it attracted itself to me by its little hands like roots sucking on dry dirt», simile. They represent the way the child behaved in exact manner.

The use of flashbacks in the paragraph showed a moment of the woman's previous life, she just compared the child with the puppy she found but it showed just her being shocked. It was that came to her mind. Then she called the girl «a little booger», «a mud turtle», «a toad

frog». These metaphors also showed the girl's being like an animal for the woman. It could also be the proof of her being shocked, of her being busy with the question «What to do with the child?» At the end of the portion there is a phrase «Damn I'm good» written with capital letters, they concerned the T-shirt she put on the child. But their being written with the help of capital letters could also appeal to the main problem of the story and to be transformed into «Damn I'm Kind?»

As for the syntactical structure of the passage, the use of repetition is very vivid here: «... there were more bruises. Bruises and worse.» It is a good example of the state the girl was in. We also came across some sentences with an inverted structure and parallel constructions.

In the end I'd like to mention again the idea, the problem of the text, the blend of moral, psychological, social problems, to be exact, which can bring us to the question: «What would We do if it happened to us?»

Analysis
by Nickolai Demenshin (group 503)

The text under interpretation is an extract taken from a bigger work under the title «The Been Trees», belonging to the pen of a contemporary American writer Barbara Kingsolver. Speaking about the author we should say that Barbara Kingsolver was born on April 8,1955. She grew up «in the middle of alfalfa field», in the part of eastern Kentucky that lies between the opulent horse farms and the impoverished coal fields. Kingsolver left Kentucky to attend De Pauw University in Indiana, where she majored in biology. She also took one creative writing course and became active in social justice organizations. Before and after graduation in 1977 Kingsolver lived and worked in Europe. Her fiction is rich with the language and imagery of her native Kentucky.

«The Been Trees», a novel about a young woman, who leaves rural Ken-

tucky and finds herself living in urban Tucson, published in 1988, was enthusiastically received by critics. It has never gone out of print and has been embraced by millions of reader throughout the world. «The Been Trees» was later on followed by such novels as «Animal Dreams», «Pigs in Heaven», «Prodigal Summer» and some others, which gave Barbara Kingsolver worldwide fame and numerous awards.

As to the extract under analysis, it starts with the conversation between two women, one of whom is asking her interlocutor to provide her with a vacant room in a motel where she and her little child found by her under unknown to us circumstances could take shelter from cold weather. During the first several minutes the woman working in the motel has been hesitating but then she agrees, thus letting her guests in. Later on, after the main character of the story finishes messing with her personal belongings, she switches her full attention to the baby. She notices that all of the child's clothes are too big, with sleeves rolled up and shirt tails wrapped around, and everything wet as mud boots and as hard to get off. Moreover, when pulling off the pants and the diapers she notices that all of the baby's body is covered with numerous bruises and that the child is a girl, an Indian girl. After washing and drying her the woman puts her to bed, takes out several stamps and a souvenir postcard and adds a line at the bottom: «I found my head rights, Mamma. They are coming with me.»

Speaking about this excerpt in general, it's worth mentioning that it is written in the first-person mode of narration. The narrator is practically merged with the main character. This feature imparts a sense of intimate sincerity to the story. It also permits the reader to see the situation «from within», through the character's eyes and feel empathy with him.

Through the text the author employs such stylistic devices as syntactic repetition (e. g. I do not know) which is used here with the purpose to emphasise the motel receptionist's feeling of uncertainty or even caution towards her unexpected guests. The same stylistic device is applied

by the author in relation to the Indian girl. The only difference is that it is lexical repetition. (e. g. the word «bruises»). In my opinion, by means of this device the author wanted to emphasise the fact that human cruelty can easily damage not only adults but children as well. The epithets «poor» and «little» used in the text in relation to the child let us look at her as a completely helpless creature, who has almost nobody nearby to wait for support from. This effect is also achieved by means of such figure of speech as simile (e. g. «hands like roots sucking on dry dirt», «as mud boots and as hard to get off», «like toad frog», «like a mud turtle»). In addition to that, the author also employs flash-backs or, in other words, the main character's reminiscences from the past (e. g. the story about a puppy or recollections of a T-shirt brought one summer from Kentucky Lake). Altogether these and some other peculiarities, which can be found in this extract under analysis, let the reader get a deeper insight into not only the main character's complex state of mind, but also other events described here by Barbara Kingsolver. By way of general appraisal of the story, it is worth pointing out that the concise and seemingly impassive narration brings the message home most efficiently. It perfectly sets us reflecting on different problems on a larger scale: of individuals and society, good and evil, and above all, of the forces that pull strings in our modern society.

3.7. J. D. Salinger. «The Catcher in the Rye»

Jerome David Salinger was born in New York City in 1919. He graduated from Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania in 1936. In 1942 Salinger was drafted into the Army. His principal assignments were in intelligence. By 1946 Salinger had returned to New York and was discharged from the Army. In the late 40's and 50's, Salinger began a series of withdrawals. Especially since his second marriage in

1955, Salinger has withdrawn more and more from society. Part of his legend is based upon his isolation and his conscious and intentional separation of himself from his society. When *The Catcher in the Rye* first appeared in 1951, it was received by critics as a literary sensation.

1

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're *nice* and all — I'm not saying that — but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I *got* pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy. I mean that's all I told D. B. about, and he's my *brother* and all. He's in Hollywood. That isn't too far from this crumby place, and he comes over and visits me practically every week end. He's going to drive me home when I go home next month maybe. He just got a Jaguar. One of those little English jobs that can do around *two* hundred miles an hour. It cost him damn near four thousand bucks. He's got a lot of dough, now. He didn't *use* to. He used to be just a regular writer, when he was home. He wrote this terrific book of short stories, *The Secret Goldfish,* in case you never heard of him. The best one in it was «The Secret Goldfish.» It was about this little kid that wouldn't let anybody look at his goldfish because he'd bought it with his own money. It killed me. Now he's out in Hollywood, D. B., being a prostitute. If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me.

Where I want to start telling is the day I left Pencey Prep. Pencey Prep is this school that's in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. You probably heard of it. You've probably seen the ads, anyway. They advertise in about a thousand magazines, always showing some hot-shot guy on a horse jumping over a fence. Like as if all you ever did at Pencey was play polo all the time. I never even once saw a horse anywhere *near* the place. And underneath the guy on the horse's picture, it always says: «Since 1888 we have been molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men.» Strictly for the birds. They don't do any damn more *molding* at Pencey than they do at any other school. And I didn't know anybody there that, was splendid and clear-thinking and all. Maybe two guys. If that many. And they probably *came* to Pencey that way.

Anyway, it was the Saturday of the football game with Saxon Hall. The game with Saxon Hall was supposed to be a very big deal around Pencey. It was the last game of the year, and you were supposed to commit suicide or something if old Pencey didn't win. I remember around three o'clock that afternoon I was standing way the hell up on top of Thomsen Hill, right next to this crazy cannon that was in the Revolutionary War and all. You could see the whole field from there, and you could see the two teams bashing each other all over the place. You couldn't see the grandstand too hot, but you could hear them all yelling, deep and terrific on the Pencey side, because practically the whole school except me was there, and scrawny and faggy on the Saxon Hall side, because the visiting team hardly ever brought many people with them.

There were never many girls at all at the football games. Only seniors were allowed to bring girls with them. It was a terrible school, no matter how you looked at it. I like to be somewhere at least where you can see a few girls around once in a while, even if they're only scratching their arms or blowing their noses or even just giggling or something. Old Selma Thurmer — she was the headmaster's daughter — showed up at the games quite often, but she wasn't exactly the type that drove

you mad with desire. She was a pretty nice girl, though. I sat next to her once in the bus from Agerstown and we sort of struck up a conversation. I liked her. She had a big nose and her nails were all bitten down and bleedy-looking and she had on those damn falsies that point all over the place, but you felt sort of sorry for her. What I liked about her, she didn't give you a lot of horse manure about what a great guy her father was. She probably knew what a phony slob he was.

The reason I was standing way up on Thomsen Hill, instead of down at the game, was because I'd just got back from New York with the fencing team. I was the goddam manager of the fencing team. Very big deal. We'd gone in to New York that morning for this fencing meet with McBurney School. Only, we didn't have the meet. I left all the foils and equipment and stuff on the goddam subway. It wasn't all my fault. I had to keep getting up to look at this map, so we'd know where to get off. So we got back to Pencey around two-thirty instead of around dinnertime. The whole team ostracized me the whole way back on the train. It was pretty funny, in a way.

The other reason I wasn't down at the game was because I was on my way to say good-by to old Spencer, my history teacher. He had the grippe, and I figured I probably wouldn't see him again till Christmas vacation started. He wrote me this note saying he wanted to see me before I went home. He knew I wasn't coming back to Pencey.

I forgot to tell you about that. They kicked me out. I wasn't supposed to come back after Christmas vacation, on account of I was flunking four subjects and not applying myself and all. They gave me frequent warning to start applying myself — especially around mid-terms, when my parents came up for a conference with old Thurmer — but I didn't do it. So I got the ax. They give guys the ax quite frequently at Pencey. If has a very good academic rating, Pencey. It really does.

Anyway, it was December and all, and it was cold as a witch's teat, especially on top of that stupid hill. I only had on my reversible and no

gloves or anything. The week before that, somebody'd stolen my camel's-hair coat right out of my room, with my fur-lined gloves right in the pocket and all. Pencey was full of crooks. Quite a few guys came from these very wealthy families, but it was full of crooks anyway. The more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has — I'm not kidding. Anyway, I kept standing next to that crazy cannon, looking down at the game and freezing my ass off.) Only, I wasn't watching the game too much. What I was really hanging around for, I was trying to feel some kind of a good-by. I mean I've left schools and places I didn't even know I was leaving them. I hate that. I don't care if it's a sad good-by or a bad good-by, but when I leave a place I like to *know* I'm leaving it. If you don't, you feel even worse.

I was lucky. All of a sudden I thought of something that helped make me know I was getting the hell out. I suddenly remembered this time, in around October, that I and Robert Tichener and Paul Campbell were chucking a football around, in front of the academic building. They were nice guys, especially Tichener. It was just before dinner and it was getting pretty dark out, but we kept chucking the ball around anyway. It kept getting darker and darker, and we could hardly *see* the ball any more, but we didn't want to stop doing what we were doing. Finally we had to. This teacher that taught biology, Mr. Zambesi, stuck his head out of this window in the academic building and told us to go back to the dorm and get ready for dinner. If I get a chance to remember that kind of stuff, I can get a good-by when I need one — at least, most of the time I can. As soon as I got it, I turned around and started running down the other side of the hill, toward old Spencer's house. He didn't live on the campus. He lived on Anthony Wayne Avenue.

I ran all the way to the main gate, and then I waited a second till I got my breath. I have no wind, if you want to know the truth. I'm quite a heavy smoker, for' one thing — that is, I used to be. They made me cut it out.

Another thing, I *grew* six and a half inches last year. That's also how I practically got t. b. and came out here for all these goddam checkups

and stuff. I'm pretty healthy, though.

Anyway, as soon as I got my breath back I ran across Route 204. It was icy as hell and I damn near fell down. I don't even know what I was running for — I guess I just felt like it. After I got across the road, I felt like I was sort of disappearing. It was that kind of a crazy afternoon, terrifically cold, and no sun out or anything, and you felt like you were disappearing every time you crossed a road.

Boy, I rang that doorbell fast when I got to old Spencer's house. I was really frozen. My ears were hurting and I could hardly move my fingers at all. «C'mon, c'mon,» I said right out loud, almost, «somebody open the *door.*» Finally old Mrs. Spencer opened it. They didn't have a maid or anything, and they always opened the door themselves. They didn't have too much dough.

«Holden!» Mrs. Spencer said. «How lovely to see you! Come in, dear! Are you frozen to death? " I think she was glad to see me. She liked me. At least, I think she did.

Boy, did I get in that house fast. «How are you, Mrs. Spencer?» I said. «How's Mr. Spencer?»

«Let me take your coat, dear,» she said. She didn't hear me ask her how Mr. Spencer was. She was sort of deaf.

She hung up my coat in the hall closet, and I sort of brushed my hair back with my hand. I wear a crew cut quite frequently and I never have to comb it much. «How've you been, Mrs. Spencer?» I said again, only louder, so she'd hear me.

«I've been just fine, Holden.» She closed the closet door. «How have *you* been?» The way she asked me, I knew right away old Spencer'd told her I'd been kicked out.

«Fine,» I said. «How's Mr. Spencer? He over his grippe yet?»

«Over it! Holden, he's behaving like a perfect — I don't know *what*... He's in his room, dear. Go right in.»

TASKS:

1. Can we consider that Holden is telling the story of the subsequent events in a long flashback?
2. What figures of speech characterise Holden as a «modern teenager»?
3. What is the central theme of the chapter?
4. Right from the beginning of the chapter, Holden employs the word «phony». Can Holden's use of the word be specifically defined or is it so loose as to have no meaning?
5. Several times there appear to be discrepancies between what Holden does and what he says. Are these illustrations lapses in memory in Salinger, or do they serve some function in the novel? Discuss Salinger's use of verb tense to indicate shifts in time level in Holden's thinking.
6. Can Holden organize his thoughts? Give examples of digressions typical of Holden's thinking?
7. How do you understand the reference to David Copperfield in the first paragraph of the chapter? Is it accidental?
8. Is Pencey Prep intended as a symbol of twentieth-century American culture?
9. What is the significance of minor characters?
10. Is the novel essentially comic or tragic, or is some other term necessary to define it?
11. To what extent is Salinger's life reflected in his fiction?

Analysis
by Maria Kruzhilina (group 503)

The piece of the novel under the title «The Catcher in the rye» belongs to the pen of J. D. Salinger, a famous American writer of the 20th century. A major theme in Salinger's work is the strong yet delicate mind of disturbed adolescents and the redemptive capacity of children in the lives of such young men. Salinger is also known for his reclusive nature. That is why the book under interpretation is his most famous publication. First published in the US in 1951, the novel remains controversial to this day for its liberal profanity and portrayal of sexuality and teenage angst; it was the 13th most frequently challenged book of the 1990s according to the American Library Association.

The text under consideration is the first chapter of the novel, and it plays an introductory role and gets a reader acquainted with the main character (which has already become a stock one) Holden Morrissey Caulfield. The story is the first person narration and Holden is the narrator and the protagonist of it. He is a highly critical and depressed sixteen-year-old who academically flunked out of Pencey Prep boarding school. Because he is so critical of others, and points out their faults only to exhibit them himself later, Holden is widely considered to be an unreliable narrator, and the details and events of his story are apt to be distorted by his point of view.

The boy's story starts on Holden's last day at Pencey Prep. He is at the crest of the hill that overlooks the football stadium. This is the final game of the season, but the narrator has never cared much for this tradition. Instead, he decides to visit the residence of Mr. Spensor, his history teacher.

The action of the whole book takes place in the US, NY City, and this chapter is about Pencey Prep, which is situated in Agerstown,

Pennsylvania. As it is along flash-back the author uses Present and Past Tenses.

There are a few themes of the novel, which are discussed in the book, they are:

phoniness («What a phony snob he was»). The boy feels surrounded by dishonesty and false pretenses. Holden puts on pretences, lies, he makes irrational and contradictory assumptions to mask his feelings, actions from others, which further alienates him from society.

— education. Holden has failed out of school and takes it for granted. There are no signs of promise of change.

the boy's strong desire to be an adult and live in the adult world, but he is not prepared for it. He is still a child, but doesn't want to be a child as he feels cruelty and unfair of the world.

the result of the previous one, it is loss of innocence. For example, Holden calls his brother «a prostitute» in Hollywood.

This style of «The Catcher in the rye» resembles a stream of consciousness, as the author uses seemingly disjointed ideas and episodes.

The tone is informal and loose and throws phrases like «that killed me» around freely. The language is plain and conversational, lacking clever patterns or careful diction, providing hints as to a deeper meaning. The first sentence of the novel is too long and it's overcrowded with numerous stylistic devices: framing («If you really want»), polysyndeton («and»), allusion («David Copperfield» — Charles Dickens's character), etc. One can find a contrast sentence like «Maybe two guys If that many». One can't but mention the widely use of such trick of speech as slang, expressions typical for the American youth of the 1950s: «Hot-shot guy», «You couldn't see the grandstand too hot», «I got the ax», «I'm not kidding», «They made me cut it out», ets.

Besides Holden, there is a large number of other characters in the book, with whom the narrator gets a reader acquainted. He starts his introduction at the boy's «touchy» parents and mainly at his elder brother D. B. A reader is not given the real exact name of Holden's brother, the writer uses only the abbreviation D. B. for it. One can also find some interesting information of him, which is described with the help of the following stylistic devises: parallelism (D. B. lives in Hollywood and Holden in «crumby place «), metonymy («being a prostitute» writer), personification («He just got a Jaguar»), slang («4 thousand bucks»), ets. Through out this paragraph one can get a feeling of loneliness, lack of attention of his brother.

The other character of the story is Selma Thurmer, whose introduction helps to show teenager's attitude to girls. Then a reader learns about school friends Robert Tichener and Paul Campbell; a teacher of biology Mr. Zambesi, his history teacher — Mr. Spensor and his wife, and others in the further characters.

But besides all the mentioned characters, one can point out one more character, it's Holden's school, Pencey Prep. For the boy it is even not just the school, but another world, planet, where innocence, naturalness, self-expressiveness were quite a rare phenomenon. To emphasize this feeling the writer implies exaggeration «about a thousand magazines», slang «hot-shot guy», «Strictly for the birds», uses anaphora in the sentence «You could see...and you could see the two teams bashing each other «. There is an inverted sentence «Very big deal», concerning the boy's attitude to Pencey and it's fencing team.

The piece of the text, where he describes his kicking out of Pencey, penetrates negative connotation, his undesired to study at place «full of crooks». The idea is stressed by the repetition of «crooks», simile «I felt like I was sort of disappearing», «it icy as hell». The word «good-by» is widely repeated in this part of the text intensifying the narration and emphasizing the mood of leaving and movement.

So, this is the story of intelligent and sensitive 16-year old boy, who narrates in a cynical voice. He finds the hypocrisy and ugliness of the world around him are also aimed at himself. He is uncomfortable with his own weaknesses and displays the exact phoniness, superficiality of the people he says he despises.

Analysis
by Nataliya Chaynikova (group 505)

J. D. SALINGER. THE CATCHER IN THE RYE.

The given extract from the novel belongs to the literary talent of Jerome David Salinger (b. 1919), an American novelists and short story writer whose reputation was established on the basis of a single novel «The Catcher In The Rye» published in 1951. The principal character, Holden Caulfield was depicted as a rebellious teenage schoolboy who reflected the growing pains of a generation of high school and college students.

Written in the first person narration, the novel depicts a few important days in the life of the protagonist Holden Caulfield, a critical and lost in his world-view 16-year-old boy who academically flunked out of Pencey Prep school. His story starts with the description of his last day at college. Holden is standing on the crest of a hill that overlooks the football stadium. It's the final game of a season, the two teams are on the field fighting for Victory. The protagonist's thoughts about the game are as follows: «You couldn't see the whole field from there, the grandstand wasn't too hot, but you could hear them all yelling, deep and terrific on the Pencey side, because practically the whole school except me was there, scrawny and faggy on the Saxon Hall side». This particular phrase gives us evidence of Holden's alienation to the society he belongs to. He has never cared much for the established traditions. Besides, the reader finds another explanation of Holden's

standing way up on Thomsin Hill instead of being down at the game: «I was the goddam manager of the fencing team. We had gone in to New York that morning ... and I left all the foils and equipment and stuff on the goddam subway». The whole team ostracized him the whole way back on the train. Surprisingly, as it might seem it didn't hurt him, he found it even «pretty funny». This fact underlines another characteristic feature of the protagonist: his immunity against the negative impact of the surroundings. Instead of taking either active or passive part in the game, he runs across the street to the residence of Mr. Spencer, his history teacher. The situation reveals here that Holden doesn't particularly care for having been expelled.

Many flashbacks throughout the entire book create a feeling of knowing Holden. The whole narration may be considered as along flash-back. The protagonist and narrator of the story is very serious in what he dwells upon and his observations are disturbingly cynical and critical. He finds the hypocrisy and ugliness of the world around him almost unbearable. His cynicism is the only way of protecting himself from the pain and miseries of the adult world.

The major themes explored in the novel are dishonesty and faults of the people he has to deal with. The reader frequently comes across the word «phony». The Longman dictionary gives the following definition of the this notion: «something false or not real, and intended to deceive someone, or someone who pretends to be good, clever, kind, etc. When they are not.» Thus, we can put the principal theme of the novel as «phoniness». Holden is looking for innocence, sincerity in the world of adults. But he doesn't find it, instead he considers adults and phonies to be equal.

Another theme of the novel is Holden's education. He doesn't think it is important: «I forgot to tell you ... They kicked me out... on account of I was flunking four subjects. They gave me frequent warning to start applying myself — but I didn't do it. So I got the ax.» The hero doesn't give any signs of remorse or promise of change.

There is one more significant theme which is indicated through the extract describing a rare girls' presence at the football games. «Only seniors were allowed to bring girls with them», this phrase highlight Holden's desire to join the adult world. «I like to be somewhere, at least where you can see a few girls around once in a while». There are two opposing desires struggling for domination in his subtle soul: he wants to be one of those adults and at the same time he realizes how cruel and unfair that world is.

The opening sentence is rather unusual as it's addressed to the reader. It's given as informal, striking the reader with the narrator's direct questioning enriched with the vocabulary of the colloquial and low colloquial layer: «and all that David Copperfield kind of crap», «I don't feel like going into it», «that stuff bores me». Later we'll find out that the whole book is built on this principle. The author talks to the reader, asks questions, shares his point of view.

This style, used throughout the novel, refers to the use of irrelevant ideas and episodes organized in a highly structured way, the style itself may be characterized as «stream of consciousness».

The protagonist mentions different names of the people he deals with.

D. B. «he's brother and all» who lives and works in Hollywood and has one of those little English jobs that cost him near four thousand bucks.

Old Selma Thurmer, the headmaster's daughter, who he felt «sort of sorry for» and liked the thing that «she didn't give you a lot of horse manure about what a great guy her father was».

Old Spencer, Holden's history teacher and his wife, Mrs. Spencer.

Robert Tichener and Paul Campbell — «nice guys» with whom he was «chucking a football in around October.

Mr. Zambezy, a teacher of biology.

It's rather complicating to make a strict division between flat and

round characters among the cast mentioned above as the only chapter does not give a complete character sketch, but it's possible to look upon Old Spencer and D. B. as flat while the protagonist is sure to be a round one. There are also unnamed characters: Holden's parents («nice people»), the fencing team, the Board of School (those who were responsible for his «kicking out» of Pence are named as «they».

The abundance of colloquial words «crumby place», «he's got a lot of dough», «that kind of crap», «we sort of struck up a conversation», «you've probably seen the ads», «they kicked me out», «I'm not kidding», «freezing my ass off», «got t. b.» make the whole text and the language adjusted to the reader's educational background. It's easy to get the narrator's idea and follow his mood.

Salinger's style produces a peculiar effect with the help of repetition. Thus, most of the phrases are ended up with «and all», the most frequent word is «goddam»: «goddam autobiography», «goddam subway», «goddam manager», «those damn falsies». The phrase «sort of» is also used often: «I was sort of disappearing», «sort of deaf», «sort of sorry».

The grammatical structures are mainly simple. In some cases we come across with the American tendency of omitting the Present Perfect tense: «He just got a Jaguar».

A stress mark should be laid upon the stylistic devices implied by Salinger throughout the chapter: epithets «crumby place», «bleedy-looking nails», «splendid, clear-thinking man», «scrawny and faggy», similes: «behaving like a perfect, it was cold as a witch's teat», «felt like you were disappearing every time you crossed the road». These devices highlight the peculiarities of the protagonist's world-view, his negative attitude towards the heap of lies in the air. Anadiplosis indicates the tension of Holden's inner world through the repetition of the word «crazy». It's necessary to point out the conflicts arresting the reader's attention as the themes mentioned above are based on

the external (the phoniness of each person and each object belonging to the destructive society) and internal (Holden is torn between his fear, personal outlook and the environment, the World of Evil). Through the direct characterization Salinger shares his vision of the situation, his contempt for people's violence.

APPENDIX

IV. Excerpts for Analysis

In the Appendix there are some extracts for further reading. There's nothing systematic or even particularly orderly about the suggestions. Mostly, these are works I like and admire for a variety of reasons, works I think you might like as well. My main suggestion, though, is to read things you like. You're not stuck with my list. Go to your bookstore or library and find novels, poems, plays, stories that engage your imagination and your intelligence. Read «Great Literature,» by all means, but read good writing. And don't wait for writers to be dead to be read. Your reading should be fun. We only call them literary works. And fare thee well.

4.1. A WORD CHILD *by Iris Murdoch*

FRIDAY

I first met Gunnar Jopling when I was an undergraduate and he was a young don in another subject (he was a historian) and at another college. He and my tutor, a mild man called Eldridge, gave a class together on 'French Literature and the Revolution', and I attended this class. It took place on Tuesdays round a long table covered with a green baize cloth in a rather dark room in Gunnar's college. It was one of those rather select classes with a restricted membership and all present thought well of themselves for being there. I was determined to be the star. I already had a considerable reputation as a linguistic polymath.

This was not the first time I had seen Gunnar. The very first time I saw

him was across the High Street. He was striding along, wearing his gown, *arm in arm with Anne.* Someone said, 'There's Gunnar Jopling. ' 'Who's the pretty girl? ' 'Mrs Gunnar Jopling. ' Gunnar had some sort of special reputation, the way some people have for no very clear reason. Of course he was clever, but there were plenty of clever people in Oxford. His appearance was striking, but again not exceptionally so. He was six foot two (an inch taller than me), a big burly chap (he had been a rugger blue and was also a notable boxer), thick straight fair hair and blue eyes and a very smooth glowing pink and white complexion. His eyes were a bright summer blue with a darker mottle, rather striking. He had a Scandinavian grandparent. He was himself English of the English and very public school.

I enjoyed the class and shone, though so unfortunately did others. We were a brilliant lot, we thought. Gunnar was a good deal more picturesque than Eldridge and I wanted Gunnar's good opinion and got it. About half way through the term Eldridge, a dry man but humane, told me that Gunnar had questioned him about me. Eldridge had told Gunnar a little about my background and this had perhaps kindled a mild interest, or so I inferred from the way in which the mottled blue eyes now scrutinized me. I suppose I was generally looked on as a bit of an oddity. There was nothing very special in all this. I sought the good opinion of any don whom I respected. I always imagined that every old Damoetas would love to hear my song. I went later (I think Gunnar actually suggested this to Eldridge) to a class which Gunnar gave on the Risorgimento. I talked to him occasionally after classes, and once or twice when I met him in the street, but he never invited me to his rooms and I never especially coveted this honour though it would certainly have flattered me. When I got my First Gunnar sent a card with 'well done' written in his tiny hand. Then a little while later, when I was elected to a fellowship at Gunnar's college, he sent me a letter of welcome in pleasingly friendly terms which led me to believe that he must have been partly instrumental in getting me in.

An Oxford college is an odd little democratic society. As the fellows run the college, personalities can gain an importance which is far from frivolous. I was well aware (because such things get around) that my election had not been uncontested. There were those who held that I was merely, in the narrowest and dullest sense, a linguist. 'Burde reads poetry for the grammar,' was a *mot* of my college enemy, Stitchworthy, who had, I was of course rapidly informed, bitterly opposed my fellowship. Gunnar's good opinion must have counted for a lot. When I knew that I had been elected, that the thing that I wanted most in the universe was now mine, I trembled with joy but also with fear. I had fought every inch of the way to where I was, and I could not have done so without having a good deal of confidence in myself as a scholar. However I also knew that I was still very far from the highly desirable condition of having 'caught up'. There were huge areas of ignorance, holes into which I might stumble, lacunae which men like Gunnar or Eldridge or Clifford Larr had quietly filled up during their schooldays without even noticing what they were doing. I was terrified of making some memorable public blunder. And I was, as I entered my paradise, secretly very vulnerable to the sarcasm of Stitchworthy and his friends and correspondingly grateful for the protection of Gunnar's respect.

I settled in. My pupils took me for granted and did not fall off their chairs laughing at the idea of being instructed by me. My colleagues turned out to be less formidable (and also in some cases considerably less brilliant) than I had imagined beforehand. The younger dons made a joke of Stitchworthy, calling him Dame Stitch. I began timidly to decorate my rooms, copying heartily from Gunnar and others whom I imagined to have good taste. I began to make plans to bring Crystal to Oxford and settle her there in some elegant nest and possibly even select some very superior person to be her husband. I also began to draw up a plan for her education, which was now at last to be taken in hand. During this time Crystal and I were both mad with happiness.

Crystal was still in the north where she was finishing her course in dress-making. (Aunt Bill was dead by then, thank God.) She was, I think, a bit nervous about coming to Oxford, in case she should 'disgrace me'. She was not at all concerned about her hypothetical grand marriage, and nor in any serious sense indeed was I. What delighted her most, after my success, was the idea that now I would teach her. I would tell her to read books and she would read them. She would work for me, work to become, for me, a worthier, more useful, more presentable sister.

I began to relax a little bit more into my surroundings, to acquire protective colouration. I bought a motor car. This absolutely delighted Crystal. I was soon on fairly easy terms with most of my colleagues, but without quite making friends. I was still awkward, separatist, aggressive, touchy. Gunnar treated me as his protege in a way which sometimes annoyed me, though he was unfailingly kind. I admired him, I wanted to be friends with him, and yet at the same time I snubbed him. We once nearly quarrelled seriously in fact over Stitchworthy. Stitchworthy, who was also a historian, had written an article for a learned journal concerning Cromwell, in which he had included a discussion of Marvell and a reference to Horace's *Epistles*. He quoted a piece of Horace and made clear from his remarks that he had misconstrued it. When I spotted this I could hardly believe my luck. I wrote a short dry note designed for the journal in question, pointing out Stitchworthy's howler, and concluding, 'grammarians may or may not read a poem adequately, but those ignorant of grammar are not reading it at all. ' I showed this little masterpiece to Gunnar, expecting him to be amused; but he was on the contrary rather annoyed and said I ought not to publish it. He said the note was spiteful in tone and that it was bad form, so soon after my election, to attack a senior don in my own college, and crow over his mistakes. He said we were all capable of making mistakes. I thought his attitude was absurd and we parted angrily. I published the note. Gunnar forgave me. Stitchworthy of course never did.

Before this I had met Anne Jopling. I first met her when I was looking over my new rooms, before I had actually moved in. It was July, a blazing hot day, and I was looking out of one of the windows in a mindless daze of happiness, surveying the extremely elegant front quad of my new college, when Gunnar and Anne came in under the archway. She was wearing a flowery mauve dress of some very light veil-like material, with a broad mauve belt. She was very slim. She looked up at the window and saw me and smiled, thereby making clear that she knew who I was. Then she said something to Gunnar. He called up, 'Can we come and see your rooms? ' I said yes, of course, please. 'We'll be up in a few minutes. ' Then he and Anne arrived with a bottle of champagne and three glasses. 'I thought we should toast your arrival. ' I was incoherent with gratitude and joy. It was one of those perfectly happy moments, which must be fairly rare in any life, when good will and circumstance glorify a human encounter. Gunnar introduced Anne, who said she had heard so much about me and had long been wanting to meet me. (p. 111—114)

4.2. The Bean Trees *by Barbara Kingsolver*

By the time we got in to see Dr. Pelinowsky I felt as though I'd won this man in one of those magazine contests where you answer fifty different questions about American cheese. He was fiftyish and a little tired-looking. His shoulders slumped, leaving empty space inside the starched shoulders of his white coat. He wore black wing-tip shoes, I noticed, and nylon socks with tiny sea horses above (he ankle bones.

Turtle became clingy again when I pulled off her T-shirt. She squeezed wads of my shirttail in both fists while Dr. Pelinowsky thumped on her knees and shined his light into her eyes. «Anybody home?» he asked. The only time she perked up at all was when he looked in her ears and

said, «Any potatoes in there?» Her mouth made a little O, but then she spaced out again.

«I didn't really think she'd turn out to be sick, or anything like that. She's basically in good shape.» I said.

«I wouldn't expect to turn anything clinically. She appears to be a healthy two-year-old.» He looked at his clipboard.

«The reason I brought her in is I'm concerned about some stuff that happened to her awhile ago. She wasn't taken care of very well.» Dr. Pelinowsky looked at me, clicking his ballpoint pen.

«I'm a foster parent,» I said, and then he raised his eyebrows and nodded. It was a miracle, this new word that satisfied everyone.

'You're saying that she was subjected to deprivation or abuse in the biological parents' home,» he said. His main technique seemed to be telling you what you'd just said.

«Yes. I think she was abused, and that she was,» I didn't know how to put this. «That she was molested. In a sexual way.»

Dr. Pelinowsky took in this information without appearing to notice. He was scribbling something on the so-called encounter form. I waited until he finished, thinking that I was going to have to say it again, but he said, «I'll do her a complete exam, but again I wouldn't expect to turn up anything now. This child has been in your care for five months?»

«More or less,» I said. «Yes.»

While he examined her he explained about abrasions and contusions and the healing process. I thought of how I'd handled Jolene Shanks exactly this way, as calm as breakfast toast, while her dead husband lay ten feet away under a sheet. «After this amount of time we might see behavioral evidence,» Dr. P. said, «but there is no residual physical damage. " He finished scribbling on the form and decided it would be a good idea to do a skeletal survey, and that sometime soon we ought to get her immunizations up to date.

I was curious to see the x-ray room, which was down a hall in another part of the office. Everything was large and clean, and they had a machine that turned out the x-rays instantly like a Polaroid camera. I don't believe Dr. Pelinowsky really understood how lucky he was. I used to spend entire afternoons in a little darkroom developing those things, sopping the stiff plastic sheets through one and another basin of liquid, then hanging them up on a line with tiny green clothespins. I used to tell Mama it was nothing more than glorified laundry.

We had to wait awhile to see him again, while he saw another patient and then read Turtle's x-rays. I hung around asking the technician questions and showing Turtle where the x-rays came out, though machines weren't really her line. She had one of her old wrestling holds on my shoulder.

When we were called back to Dr. Pelinowsky's office again he looked just ever so slightly shaken up. «What is it?» I asked him. All I could think of was brain tumors, I suppose from hanging around Lou Ann, who had learned all she knew about medicine from *General Hospital.*

He laid some of the x-rays against the window. Dr. Pelinowsky's office window looked out onto a garden full of round stones and cactus. In the dark negatives I could see Turtle's thin white bones and her skull, and it gave me the same chill Lou Ann must have felt to see her living mother's name carved on a gravestone. I shivered inside my skin.

«These are healed fractures, some of them compound,» he said, pointing with his silver pen. He moved carefully through the arm and leg bones and then to the hands, which he said were an excellent index of age. On the basis of height and weight he'd assumed she was around twenty-four months, he said, but the development of cartilage in the carpals and metacarpals indicated that she was closer to three.

«Three years?»

«Yes.» He seemed almost undecided about telling me this. «Sometimes in an environment of physical or emotional deprivation a child

will simply stop growing, although certain internal maturation does continue. It's a condition we call failure to thrive.»

«But she's thriving now. I ought to know, I buy her clothes.»

«Well, yes, of course. The condition is completely reversible.»

«Of course,» I said.

He put up more of the x-rays in the window, saying things like «spiral fibular fracture here» and «excellent healing» and «some contraindications for psychomotor development.» I couldn't really listen. I looked through the bones to the garden on the other side. There was a cactus with bushy arms and a coat of yellow spines as thick as fur. A bird had built her nest in it. In and out she flew among the horrible spiny branches, never once hesitating. You just couldn't imagine how she'd made a home in there.

4.3. THE KITE RUNNER *by Khaled Hosseini*

<...> on a cool rainy day in March 2002, a small, wondrous thing happened. I took Soraya, Khala Jamila, and Sohrab to a gathering of Afghans at Lake Elizabeth Park in Fremont. <...>

By three o'clock, the rain had stopped and the sky was a curdled gray burdened with lumps of clouds. A cool breeze blew through the park. More families turned up. Afghans greeted each other, hugged, kissed, exchanged food. Someone lighted coal in a barbecue and soon the smell of garlic and *morgh* kabob flooded my senses. There was music, some new singer I didn't know, and the giggling of children. I saw Sohrab, still in his yellow raincoat, leaning against a garbage pail, staring across the park at the empty batting cage.

A little while later, as I was chatting with the former surgeon, who told

me he and Baba had been classmates in eighth grade, Soraya pulled on my sleeve. «Amir, look!»

She was pointing to the sky. A half-dozen kites were flying high, speckles of bright yellow, red, and green against the gray sky.

«Check it out,» Soraya said, and this time she was pointing to a guy selling kites from a stand nearby.

«Hold this,» I said. I gave my cup of tea to Soraya. I excused myself and walked over to the kite stand, my shoes squishing on the wet grass. I pointed to a yellow *seh-parcha*. *«Sawl-e-nau mubabrak,»* the kite seller said, taking the twenty and handing me the kite and a wooden spool of glass *tar*. I thanked him and wished him a Happy New Year too. I tested the string the way Hassan and I used to, by holding it between my thumb and forefinger and pulling it. It reddened with blood and the kite seller smiled. I smiled back.

I took the kite to where Sohrab was standing, still leaning against the garbage pail, arms crossed on his chest. He was looking up at the sky.

«Do you like the *seh-parcha?»* I said, holding up the kite by the ends of the cross bars. His eyes shifted from the sky to me, to the kite, then back. A few rivulets of rain trickled from his hair, down his face.

«I read once that, in Malaysia, they use kites to catch fish,» I said. «I'll bet you didn't know that. They tie a fishing line to it and fly it beyond the shallow waters, so it doesn't cast a shadow and scare the fish. And in ancient China, generals used to fly kites over battlefields to send messages to their men. It's true. I'm not slipping you a trick.» I showed him my bloody thumb. «Nothing wrong with the *tar* either.»

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Soraya watching us from the tent. Hands tensely dug in her armpits. Unlike me, she'd gradually abandoned her attempts at engaging him. The unanswered questions, the blank stares, the silence, it was all too painful. She had shifted to «Holding Pattern,» waiting for a green light from Sohrab. Waiting.

I wet my index finger and held it up. «I remember the way your father checked the wind was to kick up dust with his sandal, see which way the wind blew it. He knew a lot of little tricks like that,» I said. Lowered my finger. «West, I think.»

Sohrab wiped a raindrop from his earlobe and shifted on his feet. Said nothing. I thought of Soraya asking me a few months ago what his voice sounded like. I'd told her I didn't remember anymore.

«Did I ever tell you your father was the best kite runner in Wazir Akbar Khan? Maybe all of Kabul?» I said, knotting the loose end of the spool *tar* to the string loop tied to the center spar. «How jealous he made the neighborhood kids. He'd run kites and never look up at the sky, and people used to say he was chasing the kite's shadow. But they didn't know him like I did. Your father wasn't chasing any shadows. He just... knew.»

Another half-dozen kites had taken flight. People had started to gather in clumps, teacups in hand, eyes glued to the sky.

«Do you want to help me fly this?» I said.

Sohrab's gaze bounced from the kite to me. Back to the sky.

«Okay.» I shrugged. «Looks like I'll have to fly it *tanhaii.*» Solo.

I balanced the spool in my left hand and fed about three feet of *tar.* The yellow kite dangled at the end of it, just above the wet grass. «Last chance,» I said. But Sohrab was looking at a pair of kites tangling high above the trees.

«All right. Here I go.» I took off running, my sneakers splashing rainwater from puddles, the hand clutching the kite end of the string held high above my head. It had been so long, so many years since I'd done this, and I wondered if I'd make a spectacle of myself. I let the spool roll in my left hand as I ran, felt the string cut my right hand again as it fed through. The kite was lifting behind my shoulder now, lifting, wheeling, and I ran harder. The spool spun faster and the glass string

tore another gash in my right palm. I stopped and turned. Looked up. Smiled. High above, my kite was tilting side to side like a pendulum, making that old paper-bird-flapping-its-wings sound I always associated with winter mornings in Kabul. I hadn't flown a kite in a quarter of a century, but suddenly I was twelve again and all the old instincts came rushing back.

I felt a presence next to me and looked down. It was Sohrab. Hands dug deep in the pockets of his raincoat. He had followed me.

«Do you want to try?» I asked. He said nothing. But when I held the string out for him, his hand lifted from his pocket. Hesitated. Took the string. My heart quickened as I spun the spool to gather the loose string. We stood quietly side by side. Necks bent up.

Around us, kids chased each other, slid on the grass. Someone was playing an old Hindi movie soundtrack now. A line of elderly men were praying afternoon *namaz* on a plastic sheet spread on the ground. The air smelled of wet grass, smoke, and grilled meat. I wished time would stand still.

Then I saw we had company. A green kite was closing in. I traced the string to a kid standing about thirty yards from us. He had a crew cut and a T-shirt that read THE ROCK RULES in bold block letters. He saw me looking at him and smiled. Waved. I waved back.

Sohrab was handing the string back to me.

«Are you sure?» I said, taking it.

He took the spool from me.

«Okay,» I said. «Let's give him a *sabagh,* teach him a lesson, nay?» I glanced over at him. The glassy, vacant look in his eyes was gone. His gaze flitted between our kite and the green one. His face was a little flushed, his eyes suddenly alert. Awake. Alive. I wondered when I had forgotten that, despite everything, he was still just a child.

The green kite was making its move. «Let's wait,» I said. «We'll let him

get a little closer.» It dipped twice and crept toward us. «Come on. Come to me,» I said.

The green kite drew closer yet, now rising a little above us, unaware of the trap I'd set for it. «Watch, Sohrab. I'm going to show you one of your father's favorite tricks, the old lift-and-dive.»

Next to me, Sohrab was breathing rapidly through his nose. The spool rolled in his palms, the tendons in his scarred wrists like *rubab* strings. Then I blinked and, for just a moment, the hands holding the spool were the chipped-nailed, calloused hands of a harelipped boy. I heard a crow cawing somewhere and I looked up. The park shimmered with snow so fresh, so dazzling white, it burned my eyes. It sprinkled soundlessly from the branches of white-clad trees. I smelled turnip *qurma* now. Dried mulberries. Sour oranges. Sawdust and walnuts. The muffled quiet, snow-quiet, was deafening. Then far away, across the stillness, a voice calling us home, the voice of a man who dragged his right leg.

The green kite hovered directly above us now. «He's going for it. Anytime now,» I said, my eyes flicking from Sohrab to our kite.

The green kite hesitated. Held position. Then shot down. «Here he comes!» I said.

I did it perfectly. After all these years. The old lift-and-dive trap. I loosened my grip and tugged on the string, dipping and dodging the green kite. A series of quick sidearm jerks and our kite shot up counterclockwise, in a half circle. Suddenly I was on top. The green kite was scrambling now, panic-stricken. But it was too late. I'd already slipped him Hassan's trick. I pulled hard and our kite plummeted. I could almost feel our string sawing his. Almost heard the snap.

Then, just like that, the green kite was spinning and wheeling out of control.

Behind us, people cheered. Whistles and applause broke out. I was panting. The last time I had felt a rush like this was that day in the

winter of 1975, just after I had cut the last kite, when I spotted Baba on our rooftop, clapping, beaming.

I looked down at Sohrab. One corner of his mouth had curled up just so.

A smile.

Lopsided.

Hardly there.

But there.

Behind us, kids were scampering, and a melee of screaming kite runners was chasing the loose kite drifting high above the trees. I blinked and the smile was gone. But it had been there. I had seen it.

«Do you want me to run that kite for you?»

His Adam's apple rose and fell as he swallowed. The wind lifted his hair. I thought I saw him nod.

«For you, a thousand times over,» I heard myself say.

Then I turned and ran.

It was only a smile, nothing more. It didn't make everything all right. It didn't make *anything* all right. Only a smile. A tiny thing. A leaf in the woods, shaking in the wake of a startled bird's flight.

But I'll take it. With open arms. Because when spring comes, it melts the snow one flake at a time, and maybe I just witnessed the first flake melting.

I ran. A grown man running with a swarm of screaming children. But I didn't care. I ran with the wind blowing in my face, and a smile as wide as the Valley of Panjsher on my lips.

I ran.

4.4. THE CATCHER IN THE RYE *by Jerome David Salinger*

I <...> started walking over toward Fifth Avenue.

It was Monday and all, and pretty near Christmas, ana all the stores were open. So it wasn't too bad walking on Fifth Avenue. It was fairly Christmasy. All those scraggy-looking Santa Clauses were standing on corners ringing those bells, and the Salvation Army girls, the ones that don't wear any lipstick or anything, were ringing bells too. I sort of kept looking around for those two nuns I'd met at breakfast the day before, but I didn't see them. I knew I wouldn't, because they'd told me they'd come to New York to be schoolteachers, but I kept looking for them anyway. Anyway, it was pretty Christmasy all of a sudden. A million little kids were downtown with their mothers, getting on and off buses and coming in and out of stores. I wished old Phoebe was around. She's not little enough any more to go stark staring mad in the toy department, but she enjoys horsing around and looking at the people. The Christmas before last I took her downtown shopping with me. We had a helluva time. I think it was in Bloomingdale's. We went in the shoe department and we pretended she — old Phoebe — wanted to get a pair of those very high storm shoes, the kind that have about a million holes to lace up. We had the poor salesman guy going crazy. Old Phoebe tried on about twenty pairs, and each time the poor guy had to lace one shoe all the way up. It was a dirty trick, but it killed old Phoebe. We finally bought a pair of moccasins and charged them. The salesman was very nice about it. I think he knew we were horsing around, because old Phoebe always starts giggling.

Anyway, I kept walking and walking up Fifth Avenue, without any tie on or anything. Then all of a sudden, something very spooky started happening. Every time I came to the end of a block and stepped off the goddam curb, 1 had this feeling that I'd never get to the other side of the street. I thought I'd just go down, down, down, and nobody'd

ever see me again. Boy, did it scare me. You can't imagine. I started sweating like a bastard — my whole shirt and underwear and everything. Then I started doing something else. Every time I'd get to the end of a block I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him, «Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Please, Allie.» And then when I'd reach the other side of the street without disappearing, I'd *thank* him. Then it would start all over again as soon as I got to the next corner. But I kept going and all. I was sort of afraid to stop, I think — I don't remember, to tell you the truth. I know I didn't stop till I was way up in the Sixties, past the zoo and all. Then I sat down on this bench. I could hardly get my breath, and I was still sweating like a bastard. I sat there, I guess, for about an hour. Finally, what I decided I'd do, I decided I'd go away. I decided I'd never go home again and I'd never go away to another school again. I decided I'd just see old Phoebe and sort of say good-by to her and all, and give her back her Christmas dough, and then I'd start hitchhiking my way out West. What I'd do, I figured, I'd go down to the Holland Tunnel and bum a ride, and then I'd bum another one, and another one, and another one, and in a few days I'd be somewhere out West where it was very pretty and sunny and where nobody'd know me and I'd get a job. I figured I could get a job at a filling station somewhere, putting gas and oil in people's cars. I didn't care what kind of a job it was, though. Just so people didn't know me and I didn't know anybody. I thought what I'd do was, I'd pretend I was one of those deaf-mutes. That way I wouldn't have to have any goddam stupid useless conversations with anybody. If anybody wanted to tell me something, they'd have to write it on a piece of paper and shove it over to me. They'd get bored as hell doing that after a while, and then I'd be through with having conversations for the rest of my life. Everybody'd think I was just a poor deaf-mute bastard and they'd leave me alone. They'd let me put gas and oil in their stupid cars, and they'd pay me a salary and all for it, and I'd build me a little cabin somewhere with the dough I made and live there for the rest of

my life. I'd build it right near the woods, but not right *in* them, because I'd want it to be sunny as hell all the time. I'd cook all my own food, and later on, if I wanted to get married or something, I'd meet this beautiful girl that was also a deaf-mute and we'd get married. She'd come and live in my cabin with me, and if she wanted to say anything to me, she'd have to write it on a goddam piece of paper, like everybody else. If we had any children, we'd hide them somewhere. We could buy them a lot of books and teach them how to read and write by ourselves.

I got excited as hell thinking about it. I really did. I knew the part about pretending I was a deaf-mute was crazy, but I liked thinking about it anyway. But I really decided to go out West and all. All I wanted to do first was say good-by to old Phoebe. So all of a sudden, I ran like a madman across the street — I damn near got killed doing it, if you want to know the truth — and went in this stationery store and bought a pad and pencil. I figured I'd write her a note telling her where to meet me so I could say good-by to her and give her back her Christmas dough, and then I'd take the note up to her school and get somebody in the principal's office to give it to her. But I just put the pad and pencil in my pocket and started walking fast as hell up to her school — I was too excited to write the note right in the stationery store. I walked fast because I wanted her to get the note before she went home for lunch, and I didn't have any too much time.

I knew where her school was, naturally, because I went there myself when I was a kid. When I got there, it felt funny. I wasn't sure I'd remember what it was like inside, but I did. It was exactly the same as it was when I went there. They had that same big yard inside, that was always sort of dark, with those cages around the light bulbs so they wouldn't break if they got hit with a ball. They had those same white circles painted all over the floor, for games and stuff. And those same old basketball rings without any nets — just the backboards and the rings.

Nobody was around at all, probably because it wasn't recess period, and it wasn't lunchtime yet. All I saw was one little kid, a colored kid, on his way to the bathroom. He had one of those wooden passes sticking out of his hip pocket, the same way we used to have, to show we had permission and all to go to the bathroom.

I was still sweating, but not so bad any more. I went over to the stairs and sat down on the first step and took out the pad and pencil I'd bought. The stairs had the same smell they used to have when I went there. Like somebody'd just taken a leak on them. School stairs always smell like that. Anyway, I sat there and wrote this note:

Dear Phoebe,

I can't wait around till Wednesday any more so I will probably hitch hike out west this afternoon. Meet me at the Museum of art near the door at quarter past 12 if you can and I will give you your Christmas dough back. I didn't spend much.

Love,

Holden

Her school was practically right near the museum, and she had to pass it on her way home for lunch anyway, so I knew she could meet me all right.

Then I started walking up the stairs to the principal's office so I could give the note to somebody that would bring it to her in her classroom. I folded it about ten times so nobody'd open it. You can't trust anybody in a goddam school. But I knew they'd give it to her if I was her brother and all.

While I was walking up the stairs, though, all of a sudden I thought I was going to puke again. Only, I didn't. I sat down for a second, and then I felt better. But while I was sitting down, I saw something that drove me crazy. Somebody'd written «Fuck you» on the wall. It drove

me damn near crazy. I thought how Phoebe and all the other little kids would see it, and how they'd wonder what the hell it meant, and then finally some dirty kid would tell them — all cockeyed, naturally — what it meant, and how they'd all *think* about it and maybe even *worry* about it for a couple of days. I kept wanting to kill whoever'd written it. I figured it was some perverty bum that'd sneaked in the school late at night to take a leak or something and then wrote it on the wall. I kept picturing myself catching him at it, and how I'd smash his head on the stone steps till he was good and goddam dead and bloody. But I knew, too, I wouldn't have the guts to do it. I knew that. That made me even more depressed. I hardly even had the guts to rub it off the wall with my *hand,* if you want to know the truth. I was afraid some teacher would catch me rubbing it off and would think *I'd* written it. But I rubbed it out anyway, finally. Then I went on up to the principal's office.

The principal didn't seem to be around, but some old lady around a hundred years old was sitting at a typewriter. I told her I was Phoebe Caulfield's brother, in 4B-1, and I asked her to please give Phoebe the note. I said it was very important because my mother was sick and wouldn't have lunch ready for Phoebe and that she'd have to meet me and have lunch in a drugstore. She was very nice about it, the old lady. She took the note off me and called some other lady, from the next office, and the other lady went to give it to Phoebe. Then the old lady that was around a hundred years old and I shot the breeze for a while. She was pretty nice, and I told her how I'd gone there to school, too, and my brothers. She asked me where I went to school now, and I told her Pencey, and she said Pencey was a very good school. Even if I'd wanted to, I wouldn't have had the strength to straighten her out. Besides, if she thought Pencey was a very good school, let her think it. You hate to tell *new* stuff to somebody around a hundred years old. They don't like to hear it. Then, after a while, I left. It was funny. She yelled «Good luck!» at me the same way old Spencer did when I left

Pencey. God, how I hate it when somebody yells «Good luck!» at me when I'm leaving somewhere. It's depressing. (p. 198)

4.5. WHY, HONEY? *By Raymond Carver*

Raymond Carver was born in Clatskanie, Oregon, in 1939. He has published numerous stories, chapbooks and limited editions. In 1988 he was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. His book *Where I'm Calling From* has been translated into more than twenty languages.

Dear Sir:

I was so surprised to receive your letter asking about my son, how did you know I was here? I moved here years ago right after it started to happen. No one knows who I am here but I'm afraid all the same. Who I am afraid of is him. When I look at the paper I shake my head and wonder. I read what they write about him and I ask myself is that man really my son, is he really doing these things?

He was a good boy except for his outbursts and that he could not tell the truth. I can't give you any reasons. It started one summer over the Fourth of July, he would have been about fifteen. Our cat Trudy disappeared and was gone all night and the next day. Mrs. Cooper who lives behind us came the next evening to tell me Trudy crawled into her backyard that afternoon to die. Trudy was cut up she said but she recognized Trudy. Mr. Cooper buried the remains.

Cut up? I said. What do you mean cut up?

Mr. Cooper saw two boys in the field putting firecrackers in Trudy's ears and in her you know what. He tried to stop them but they ran.

Who, who would do such a thing, did he see who it was?

He didn't know the other boy but one of them ran this way. Mr. Cooper thought it was your son.

I shook my head. No, that's just not so, he wouldn't do a thing like that, he loved Trudy, Trudy has been in the family for years, no, it wasn't my son.

That evening I told him about Trudy and he acted surprised and shocked and said we should offer a reward. He typed something up and promised to post it at school. But just as he was going to his room that night he said don't take it too hard, mom, she was old, in cat years she was 65 or 70, she lived a long time.

He went to work afternoons and Saturdays as a stockboy at Hartley's. A friend of mine who worked there, Betty Wilks, told me about the job and said she would put in a word for him. I mentioned it to him that evening and he said good, jobs for young people are hard to find.

The night he was to draw his first check I cooked his favorite supper and had everything on the table when he walked in. Here's the man of the house, I said, hugging him. I am so proud, how much did you draw, honey? Eighty dollars, he said. I was flabbergasted. That's wonderful, honey, I just cannot believe it. I'm starved, he said, let's eat.

I was happy, but I couldn't understand it, it was more than I was making.

When I did the laundry I found the stub from Hartley's in his pocket, it was for 28 dollars, he said 80. Why didn't he just tell the truth? I couldn't understand.

I would ask him where did you go last night, honey? To the show he would answer. Then I would find out he went to the school dance or spent the evening riding around with somebody in a car. I would think what difference could it make, why doesn't he just be truthful, there is no reason to lie to his mother.

I remember once he was supposed to have gone on a field trip, so I asked him what did you see on the field trip, honey? And he shrugged

and said land formations, volcanic rock, ash, they showed us where there used to be a big lake a million years ago, now it's just a desert. He looked me in the eyes and went on talking. Then I got a note from the school the next day saying they wanted permission for a field trip, could he have permission to go.

Near the end of his senior year he bought a car and was always gone. I was concerned about his grades but he only laughed. You know he was an excellent student, you know that about him if you know anything. After that he bought a shotgun and a hunting knife.

I hated to see those things in the house and I told him so. He laughed, he always had a laugh for you. He said he would keep the gun and the knife in the trunk of his car, he said they would be easier to get to there anyway.

One Saturday night he did not come home. I worried myself into a terrible state. About ten o'clock the next morning he came in and asked me to cook him breakfast, he said he had worked up an appetite out hunting, he said he was sorry for being gone all night, he said they had driven a long way to get to this place. It sounded strange. He was nervous.

Where did you go?

Up to the Wenas. We got a few shots.

Who did you go with, honey?

Fred.

Fred?

He stared and I didn't say anything else.

On the Sunday right after I tiptoed into his room for his car keys. He had promised to pick up some breakfast items on his way home from work the night before and I thought he might have left the things in his car. I saw his new shoes sitting half under his bed and covered with mud and sand. He opened his eyes.

Honey, what happened to your shoes? Look at your shoes.

I ran out of gas, I had to walk for gas. He sat up. What do you care?

I am your mother.

While he was in the shower I took the keys and went out to his car. I opened the trunk. I didn't find the groceries. I saw the shotgun lying on a quilt and the knife too and I saw a shirt of his rolled in a ball and I shook it out and it was full of blood. It was wet. I dropped it. I closed the trunk and started back for the house and I saw him watching at the window and he opened the door.

I forgot to tell you, he said, I had a bad bloody nose, I don't know if that shirt can be washed, throw it away. He smiled.

A few days later I asked how he was getting along at work. Fine, he said, he had gotten a raise. But I met Betty Wilks on the street and she said they were all sorry at Hartley's that he had quit, he was so well liked, she said, Betty Wilks.

Two nights after that I was in bed but I couldn't sleep, I stared at the ceiling. I heard his car pull up out front and I listened as he put the key in the lock and he came through the kitchen and down the hall to his room and he shut the door after him. I got up. I could see light under his door, I knocked and pushed on the door and said would you like a hot cup of tea, honey, I can't sleep. He was bent over by the dresser and slammed a drawer and turned on me, get out he screamed, get out of here, I'm sick of you spying he screamed. I went to my room and cried myself to sleep. He broke my heart that night.

The next morning he was up and out before I could see him, but that was all right with me. From then on I was going to treat him like a lodger unless he wanted to mend his ways, I was at my limit. He would have to apologize if he wanted us to be more than just strangers living together under the same roof.

When I came in that evening he had supper ready. How are you? he said, he took my coat. How was your day?

I said I didn't sleep last night, honey. I promised myself I wouldn't bring it up and I'm not trying to make you feel guilty but I'm not used to being talked to like that by my son.

I want to show you something, he said, and he showed me this essay he was writing for his civics class. I believe it was on relations between the congress, and the supreme court. (It was the paper that won a prize for him at graduation!) I tried to read it and then I decided, this was the time. Honey, I'd like to have a talk with you, it's hard to raise a child with things the way they are these days, it's especially hard for us having no father in the house, no man to turn to when we need him. You are nearly grown now but I am still responsible and I feel I am entitled to some respect and consideration and have tried to be fair and honest with you. I want the truth, honey, that's all I've ever asked from you, the truth. Honey, I took a breath, suppose you had a child who when you asked him something, anything, where he's been or where he's going, what he's doing with his time, anything, never, he never once told you the truth? Who if you asked him is it raining outside, would answer no, it is nice and sunny, and I guess laugh to himself and think you were too old or too stupid to see his clothes are wet. Why should he lie, you ask yourself, what does he gain I don't understand. I keep asking myself why but I don't have the answer. Why, honey?

He didn't say anything, he kept staring, then he moved over alongside me and said I'll show you. Kneel is what I say, kneel down is what I say, he said, that's the first reason why.

I ran to my room and locked the door. He left that night, he took his things, what he wanted, and he left. Believe it or not I never saw him again. I saw him at his graduation but that was with a lot of people around. I sat in the audience and watched him get his diploma and a

prize for his essay, then I heard him give the speech and then I clapped right along with the rest.

I went home after that.

I have never seen him again. Oh sure I have seen him on the TV and I have seen his pictures in the paper.

I found out he joined the marines and then I heard from someone he was out of the marines and going to college back east and then he married that girl and got himself in politics. I began to see his name in the paper. I found out his address and wrote to him, I wrote a letter every few months, there never was an answer. He ran for governor and was elected, and was famous now. That's when I began to worry.

I built up all these fears, I became afraid, I stopped writing him of course and then I hoped he would think I was dead. I moved here. I had them give me an unlisted number. And then I had to change my name. If you are a powerful man and want to find somebody, you can find them, it wouldn't be that hard.

I should be so proud but I am afraid. Last week I saw a car on the street with a man inside I know was watching me, I came straight back and locked the door. A few days ago the phone rang and rang, I was lying down. I picked up the receiver but there was nothing there.

I am old. I am his mother. I should be the proudest mother in all the land but I am only afraid.

Thank you for writing. I wanted someone to know. I am very ashamed.

I also wanted to ask how you got my name and knew where to write, I have been praying no one knew. But you did. Why did you? Please tell me why.

Yours truly,

4.6. ALL THE KING'S MEN *by Robert Penn Warren*

Born in 1905 in Kentucky, educated at Vanderbilt University, the University of California, and Yale University, a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, Robert Penn Warren made his literary debut as a member of the «Fugitive» group of young Southern poets. Since then, he has taken his place as one of America's most multi-faceted leading men of letters. As editor, he deeply influenced the development of Southern writing. As critic, teacher and anthologist, he has played an important role in American higher education. Above all, his name will endure as a poet and a novelist whose works have been accorded a rare combination of critical and popular recognition. He has been awarded both the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the Bollingen Prize for poetry, to name but two highlights of a career graced with honors.

CHAPTER FOUR

That night when the Boss and I called on Judge Irwin in the middle of the night and when, burning the road back to Mason City in the dark, the car hurtled between the back fields, he said to me, «There is always something.»

And I said, «Maybe not on the Judge.»

And he said, «Man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passeth from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud. There is always something.»

And he told me to dig it out, dig it up, the dead cat with patches of fur still clinging to the tight, swollen, dove-gray hide. It was the proper job for me, for, as I have said, I was once a student of history. A student of history does not care what he digs out of the ash pile, the midden, the sublunary dung heap, which is the human past. He doesn't

care whether it is the dead pussy or the Kohinoor diamond. So it was a proper assignment for me, an excursion into the past.

It was to be my second excursion into the past, more interesting and sensational than the first, and much more successful. In fact, this second excursion into the past was to be perfectly successful. But the first one had not been successful. It had not been successful because in the midst of the process I tried to discover the truth and not the facts. Then, when the truth was not to be discovered, or discovered could not be understood by me, I could not bear to live with the cold-eyed reproach of the facts. So I walked out of a room, the room where the facts lived in a big box of three-by-five-inch note cards, and kept on walking until I walked into my second job of historical research, the job which should be known as the «Case of the Upright Judge.»

But I must tell about the first excursion into the enchantments of the past. Not that the first excursion has anything directly to do with the story of Willie Stark, but it has a great deal to do with the story of Jack Burden, and the story of Willie Stark and the story of Jack Burden are, in one sense, one story.

Long ago Jack Burden was a graduate student, working for his Ph. D. in American History, in the State University of his native state. This Jack Burden (of whom the present Jack Burden, *Me*, is a legal, biological, and perhaps even metaphysical continuator) lived in a slatternly apartment with two other graduate students, one industrious, stupid, unlucky, and alcoholic and the other idle, intelligent, lucky, and alcoholic.

At least, they were alcoholic for a period after the first of the month, when they received the miserable check paid them by the University for their miserable work as assistant teachers. The industry and ill luck of one canceled out against the idle-ness and luck of the other and they both amounted to the same thing, and they drank what they could get when they could get it. They drank because they didn't

really have the slightest interest in what they were doing now, and didn't have the slightest hope for the future. They could not even bear the thought of pushing on to finish their degrees, for that would mean leaving the University (leaving the first-of-the-month drunks, the yammer about «work» and the «ideas» in smoke-blind rooms, the girls who staggered slightly and giggled indiscreetly on the dark stairs leading to the apartment) to go to some normal school on a sun-baked crossroads or a junior college long on Jesus and short on funds, to go to face the stark reality of drudgery and dry rot and prying eyes and the slow withering of the green wisp of dream which had, like some window plant in an invalid's room, grown out of a bottle. Only the bottle hadn't had water in it. It had had something which looked like water, smelled like kerosene, and tasted like carbolic acid: one-run corn whisky.

Jack Burden lived with them, in the slatternly apartment among the unwashed dishes in the sink and on the table, the odor of stale tobacco smoke, the dirty shirts and underwear piled in comers. He even took a relish in the squalor, in the privilege of letting a last crust of buttered toast fall to the floor to be undisturbed until the random heel should grind it into the mud-colored carpet, in the spectacle of the fat roach moving across the cracked linoleum of the bathroom floor while he steamed in the tub. Once he had brought his mother to the apartment for tea, and she had sat on the edge of the overstuffed| chair, holding a cracked cup and talking with a brittle and calculated charm out of a face which was obviously being held in shape by a profound exercise of will. She saw a roach venture out from the kitchen door. She saw one of Jack Burden's friends crush an ant on the inner lip of the sugar bowl and flick the carcass from his finger. The nail of the finger itself was not very clean. But she kept right on delivering the charm, out of the rigid face. He had to say that for her.

But afterward, as they walked down the street, she had said, «Why do you live like that?»

«It's what I'm built for, I reckon,» Jack Burden said.

«With those people,» she said.

«They're all right,» he said, and wondered if they were, and wondered if he was.

His mother didn't say anything for a minute, making a sharp, bright clicking on the pavement with her heels as she walked along, holding her small shoulders trimly back, carrying her famished-cheeked, blue-eyed, absolutely innocent face slightly lifted to the pulsing sunset world of April like a very expensive present the world ought to be glad even to have a look at.

Walking along beside him, she said meditatively, «That dark-haired one — if he'd get cleaned up — he wouldn't be bad looking.»

«That's what a lot of other women think,» Jack Burden said, and suddenly felt a nauseated hatred of the dark-haired one, the one who had killed the ant on the sugar bowl, who had the dirty nails. But he had to go on, something in him made him go on, «Yes, and a lot of them don't even care about cleaning him up. They'll take him like he is. He's the great lover of the apartment. He put the sag in the springs of that divan we got.»

«Don't be vulgar,» she said, because she definitely did not like what is known as vulgarity in conversation.

«It's the truth,» he said.

She didn't answer, and her heels did the bright clicking. Then she said, «If he'd throw those awful clothes away — and get something decent.»

«Yeah,» Jack Burden said, «on his seventy-five dollars a month.»

She looked at him now, down at his clothes. «Yours are pretty awful, too,» she said.

«Are they?» Jack Burden demanded.

«I'll send you money for some decent clothes,» she said.

A few days later the check came and a note telling him to get a «couple of decent suits and accessories.» The check was for two hundred and fifty dollars. He did not even buy a necktie. But he and the two other men in the apartment had a wonderful blowout, which lasted for five days, and as a result of which the industrious and unlucky one lost his job and the idle and lucky one got too sociable, and, despite his luck, contracted a social disease. But nothing happened to Jack Burden, for nothing ever happened to Jack Burden, who was invulnerable. Perhaps that was the curse of Jack Burden: he was invulnerable.

So Jack Burden lived in the slatternly apartment with the two other graduate students, for even after being fired the unlucky, industrious one still lived in the apartment. He simply stopped paying anything but he stayed. He borrowed money for cigarettes. He sullenly ate the food the others brought in and cooked. He lay around during the day, for there was no reason to be industrious any more, ever again. Once at night, Jack Burden woke up and thought he heard the sound of sobs from the living room, where the unlucky, industrious one slept on a wall bed. Then one day the unlucky, industrious one was not there. They never did know where he had gone, and they never heard from him again.

But before that they lived in the apartment, in an atmosphere of brotherhood and mutual understanding. They had this in common: they were all hiding. The difference was in what they were biding from. The two others were hiding from the future from the day when they would get degrees and leave the University. Jack Burden, however, was hiding from the present. The other two took refuge in the present. Jack Burden took refuge in the past. The other two sat in the living room and argued and drank or played cards or read, but Jack Borden was sifting, as like as not, back in his bedroom before a little pine table, with the notes and papers and books before him, scarcely hearing the voices. He might come out and take drink or take a hand

of cards or argue or do any of the other things they did, but what was real was back in that bedroom on the pine table.

What was back in the bedroom on the pine table?

A large packet of letters, eight tattered, black-bound account books tied together with faded red tape, a photograph, about five by eight inches, mounted on cardboard and stained in its lower half by water, and a plain gold ring, man-sized, with some engraving in it, on a loop of string. The past. Or that part of the past which had gone by the name of Cass Mastern.

Cass Mastern was one of the two maternal uncles of Ellis Burden, the Scholarly Attorney, a brother of his mother, Lavinia Mastern. The other uncle was named Gilbert Mastern, who died in 1914, at the age of ninety-four or -five, rich, a builder of railroads, a sitter on boards of directors, and left the packet of letters, the black account books, and the photograph, and a great deal of money to a grandson (and not a penny to Jack Burden). Some ten years later the heir of Gilbert Mastern, recollecting that Jack Burden, with whom he had no personal acquaintance, was a student of history, or something of the sort, sent him the packet of letters, the account books, and the photograph, asking if he, Jack Burden, thought that the enclosures were of any «financial interest» since he, the heir, had heard' that libraries sometimes would pay a «fair sum for old papers; and antebellum relics and keepsakes.» Jack Burden replied that since Cass Mastern had been of no historical importance as an individual, it was doubtful that any library would pay more than a few dollars, if anything, for the material, and asked for instructions as to the disposition of the parcel. The heir replied that under the circumstances Jack Burden might keep the things for «sentimental reasons.»

So Jack Burden made the acquaintance of Cass Mastern, who had died in 1864 at a military hospital in Atlanta, who had been only a heard but forgotten name to him, and who was the pair of dark, wide-set,

deep eyes which burned out of the photograph, through the dinginess and dust and across more than fifty years.

4.7. THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL *by Willa Carther*

Willa Cather was born in Winchester, Virginia in 1873. She attended the University of Nebraska where she studied Latin and Greek and was graduated in 1895. She established herself as a major American novelist with the publication of *O Pioneers!* In 1913, but considered *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) her best book. She died in 1947. «To read the stories of Willa Cather is to discover that her short fiction is as essential part of the great legacy she left to our country.» (Robert K. Miller)

<...> As Steavens closed the door after him he glanced back at the lawyer, sitting by the coffin in the dim light, with his chin resting on his hand.

The same misty group that had stood before the door of the express car shuffled into the dining-room. In the light of the kerosene lamp they separated and became individuals. The minister, a pale, feeble-looking man with white hair and blond chin-whiskers, took his seat beside a small side table and placed his Bible upon it. The Grand Army man sat down behind the stove and tilted his chair back comfortably against the wall, fishing his quill toothpick from his waistcoat pocket. The two bankers, Phelps and Elder, sat off in a corner behind the dinner-table, where they could finish their discussion of the new usury law and its effect on chattel security loans. The real estate agent, an old man with a smiling, hypocritical face, soon joined them. The coal and lumber dealer and the cattle shipper sat on opposite sides of the

hard coal-burner, their feet on the nickel-work. Steavens took a book from his pocket and began to read. The talk around him ranged through various topics of local interest while the house was quieting down. When it was clear that the members of the family were in bed, the Grand Army man hitched his shoulders and, untangling his long legs, caught his heels on the rounds of his chair.

«S'pose there'll be a will, Phelps?» he queried in his weak falsetto.

The banker laughed disagreeably, and began trimming his nails with a pearl-handled pocket-knife.

«There'll scarcely be any need for one, will there?» he queried in his turn.

The restless Grand Army man shifted his position again, getting his knees still nearer his chin. «Why, the ole man says Harve's done right well lately,» he chirped.

The other banker spoke up. «I reckon he means by that Harve ain't asked him to mortgage any more farms lately, so as he could go on with his education.»

«Seems like my mind don't reach back to a time when Harve wasn't bein' edycated,» tittered the Grand Army man.

There was a general chuckle. The minister took out his handkerchief and blew his nose sonorously. Banker Phelps closed his knife with a snap. «It's too bad the old man's sons didn't turn out better,» he remarked with reflective authority. «They never hung together. He spent money enough on Harve to stock a dozen cattle-farms, and he might as well have poured it into Sand Creek. If Harve had stayed at home and helped nurse what little they had, and gone into stock on the old man's bottom farm, they might all have been well fixed. But the old man had to trust everything to tenants and was cheated right and left.»

«Harve never could have handled stock none,» interposed the cattleman. «He hadn't it in him to be sharp. Do you remember when he

bought Sander's mules for eight-year olds, when everybody in town knew that Sander's father-in-law give 'em to his wife for a wedding present eighteen years before, an' they was full-grown mules then?»

Every one chuckled, and the Grand Army man rubbed his knees with a spasm of childish delight.

«Harve never was much account for anything practical, and he shore was never fond of work,» began the coal and lumber dealer. «I mind the last time he was home; the day he left, when the old man was out to the barn helpin' his hand hitch up to take Harve to the train, and Cal Moots was patchin' up the fence, Harve, he come out on the step and sings out, in his ladylike voice: 'Cal Moots, Cal Moots! please come cord my trunk.»

«That's Harve for you,» approved the Grand Army man gleefully. «I kin hear him howlin' yet, when he was a big feller in long pants and his mother used to whale him with a rawhide in the barn for lettin' the cows git foundered in the cornfield when he was dri-vin' 'em home from pasture. He killed a cow of mine that-a-way onct—a pure Jersey and the best milker I had, an' the ole man had to put up for her. Harve, he was watchin' the sun set acrost the marshes when the anamile got away; he argued that sunset was oncommon fine.»

«Where the old man made his mistake was in sending the boy East to school,» said Phelps, stroking his goatee and speaking in a deliberate, judicial tone. «There was where he got his head full of trapseing to Paris and all such folly. What Harve needed, of all people, was a course in some first-class Kansas City business college.»

The letters were swimming before Steavens's eyes. Was it possible that these men did not understand, that the palm on the coffin meant nothing to them? The very name of their town would have remained forever buried in the postal guide had it not been now and again mentioned in the world in connection with Harvey Merrick's. He remembered what his master had said to him on the day of his death, after

the congestion of both lungs had shut off any probability of recovery, and the sculptor had asked his pupil to send his body home. «It's not a pleasant place to be lying while the world is moving and doing and bettering,» he had said with a feeble smile, «but it rather seems as though we ought to go back to the place we came from in the end. The townspeople will come in for a look at me; and after they have had their say, I shan't have much to fear from the judgment of God. The wings of the Victory, in there» — with a weak gesture toward his studio — «will not shelter me.» <...>

4.8. **JONI** by *J. Eareckson*

The hot July sun was setting low in the west and gave the waters of Chesapeake Bay a warmed glow. The water was murky, and as my body broke the surface in a dive, its cold cleanness doused my skin.

In a jumble of actions and feelings, many things happened simultaneously. I felt my head strike something hard and unyielding. At the same time, clumsily and crazily, my body sprawled out of control. I heard or felt a loud electric buzzing, an unexplainable inner sensation. It was something like an electrical shock, combined with a vibration — like a heavy metal spring being suddenly and sharply uncoiled, its «sprong» perhaps muffled by the water. Yet it wasn't really a sound or even a feeling — just a sensation. I felt no pain.

f heard the underwater sound of crunching, grinding sand, I was lying face down on the bottom. *Where? How did I get here? Why are my arms tied to my chest?* My thoughts screamed. *Hey! I'm caught!*

I felt a small tidal undercurrent lift me slightly and let me settle once more on the bottom. Out of the corner of my eye I saw light above me. Some of the confusion left. I remembered diving into the bay. *Then*

what? Am I caught in a fishinet or something? I need to get out! I tried to kick. *My feet must be tied or caught, too!*

Panic seized me. With all my willpower and strength, I tried to break free. Nothing happened. Another tidal swell lifted and rolled.

What's wrong? I hit my head. Am I unconscious? Trying to move is like trying to move in a dream. Impossible. But I'll drown! Will I wake up in time? Will someone see me? I can't be unconscious, or I wouldn 't be aware of what's happening. No, I'm alive.

I felt the pressure of holding my breath begin to build. I'd have to breathe soon.

Another tidal swell gently lifted me. Fragments of faces, thoughts, and memories spun crazily across my consciousness. My friends. My parents. Things I was ashamed of. Maybe God was calling me to come and explain these actions.

«Joni!» A somber voice echoed down some eerie corridor, almost as a summons. God? Death?

I'm going to die! I don't want to die! Help me, please. <...>

I looked up at a ventilator grill above my head, at the high, ancient, cracked piaster ceiling, I tried to turn my head to see the rest of my surroundings, but I couldn't move at all. Sharp pains on each side of my head resisted my attempt to move. I sensed that the holes they had drilled in my skull had something to do with this. Out of the corner of my eyes, I could see large metal tongs attached to a spring-cable device pulling my head away from the rest of my body. It took an unusual amount of strength — both mental and physical — just to learn this much about my new surroundings.

During those first days I drifted in and out of consciousness. The drugs sent me off into a dream world, a nightmare devoid of reality. Hallucinations were common and often frightening. Dreams, impressions, and memories blurred together in confusion so that I often

thought I was losing my mind. <...>

I discovered I was encased in some kind of a canvas frame. There was an opening for my face, and I could see only an area immediate beneath my bed. A pair of legs with white shoes and nylon hose stood within this narrow field of vision.

Gradually I became aware of my surroundings. I learned that the device I called a bed was really a Stryker Frame. It looked like I was in a canvas sandwich held tightly by straps. Two nurses or orderlies would come every two hours to turn me over. They'd place a canvas frame on top of me, and while a nurse held the weights attached to the «ice tong» calipers (and my head), they would deftly flip me 180 degrees. Then they would remove the frame I had been lying on and make sure I was ready for my two-hour shift in this new position. I had two views — the floor and the ceiling. <...>

When Dr. Sherrill, the physician in charge of my case, came by later, I accosted him. «Dr. Sherrill, what's wrong with me?»

His reply was even, without inflection, so I had no way of measuring the seriousness of what he said. «Don't you remember, Joni? You have a lesion of the spinal core at the fourth and fifth cervical levels caused by a fracture-dislocation.»

«I broke my neck?»

«Yes.»

«But that means I'll die.»

«No. Not necessarily, «Dr. Sherrill replied, «it means only that it is a very serious accident. The fact that you've survived about lour weeks now means you've more than likely passed that crisis.» «You mean you thought I was going to die? Before?» «You were a badly injured girl. Many people don't survive accidents of this nature. »

«I guess I'm lucky» I offered.

«Lucky, indeed. And strong. You have a tremendous will. Now that

we've passed this crisis, I want you to concentrate all your will power on getting better.» <...>

«I know it'll take time, but I'll get better. These things take time —

«Yes,» dad said. «How much time are we talking about, Dr. Sherrill?»

Mother added her concern, too. «You're talking about Joni's friends going off to college this fall. But I sense you're saying Joni won't be able to. We made a deposit on her tuition for the fall term at

Western Maryland University. Should we postpone her entrance until next semester?»

«Uh — at least.»

«Really?»

«Mrs. Eareckson, you might as well have them return your deposit. I'm afraid college will be out of the question for Joni.»

«Y-you mean — that you don't know how soon Joni will walk again?»

«Walk? I'm afraid you don't understand, Mrs. Eareckson. Joni's injury is permanent. The fusion surgery didn't change that.»

The word *permanent* slammed into my consciousness like a bullet.

I could tell that this was also the first time mom and dad had been confronted with the fact of a permanent injury. Either we had all been too naive or the medical people had been too vague in their explanations. Perhaps both. <...>

«I want you to get me a mirror.» «Uh — okay. I'll bring one next time I come.» «No. I mean now. Get one from the nurse.» «Why don't we wait. I'll bring you your pretty dresser set from home.»

«Jackie!» I was getting angry at her. «Bring me a mirror! Now!»

She slowly edged toward the door and was back shortly with a mirror. Her hands were shaking, and her eyes blinked nervously as she held it up before me.

I screamed and Jackie jumped, nearly dropping the mirror. «It's ghastly!»

«Oh, God, how can You do this to me?» I prayed through tears. «What have You done to me?»

The figure in the mirror seemed scarcely human. As I stared at my own reflection, I saw two eyes, darkened and sunk into the sockets, bloodshot and glassy. My weight had dropped from 125 to 80, so that I appeared to be little more than a skeleton covered by yellow, jaundiced skin. My shaved head only accented my grotesque skeletal appearance. As I talked, I saw my teeth, black from the effects of medication. I felt like vomiting.

Jackie took away the mirror and began to cry with me, «I'm sorry, Joni, «she sobbed, «I didn't want you to see.»

«Please take it away. I never want to look in a mirror again! Jackie — I can't take it any more. I'm dying, Jackie. Look at me. I'm almost dead now. Why do they let me suffer like this?»

«I — I don't know, Joni.»

«Jackie, you've got to help me. They're keeping me alive. It's not right. I'm dying anyway. Why can't they just let me die? Jackie — please — you've got to help,» I pleaded.

«But how, Joni?»

«I don't know. Give me something — you know — an overdose of pills?»

«You mean you want me to kill you? ' Jackie asked wide-eyed.

«Yes — I mean no — you won't be killing me. You'll just be helping me die sooner. Look, I'm already dying. I'm suffering. Can't you help me end the suffering? If I could move. I'd do it myself!» T was angry and frustrated. «Please — cut my wrists — there's no feeling, I'd have no pain. I'll die peaceful. Jackie. Please! Do something.»

Jackie began to sob. «I can't Joni. I just can't!» <...>

During the next few days, I got an even closer look at Greenoaks. Patients from every age, economic, occupational, and racial background were housed in the four wings of the institution. They consisted of amputees, paraplegics, quadriplegics, polio victims, and those suffering from muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and other diseases affecting the motor and nervous systems.

«How come there are so many new people— mostly guys our age?» I asked B. J.

«Broken necks. Most broken necks happen in summer with in city hospitals and then come here for rehab,» B. J. explained. «How long have you been here, B. J.?» «Two years,» she answered.

Two years! I recoiled inwardly at the thought. Two *years — and she's still paralyzed and in bed like me!* The fact that I might be here that long really depressed me. I was silent for a long while. <...>

Chris was every bit as pleasant, cheerful, helpful, and encouraging as Joe and Earl, my two physical therapy aides.

«My job», she explained simply, «is to help you learn how to function out there, in the world.»

«That's all, huh?» I kidded.

«Well, you'll be doing all the work. So my job is easy.»

«What are you going to teach me?»

«Well, first, how about learning how to write?»

«Okay, Chris, what do I do?» I asked.

«Hold this pencil in your mouth. Grip it with your teeth, like this, «Chris explained. She held a pencil in her own mouth to demonstrate and placed one in my mouth.

«Okay. Good. See, it's easy. Uh — not so tight. Just hold it firmly so you won»t drop it — tight enough to control it. See?»

«Mm-mff, «I mumbled, meaning I understood.

Chris taught me how to make lines, circles, and other marks. At first these were squiggly and wobbly. But after many hours of practice, I began to have more control.

Finally, I was able to make letters. With determination and concentration, I wrote a letter to morn and dad. It was brief, and the letters were still big, awkward squiggles, but it was writing!

This sense of accomplishment gave me a more positive attitude, and I began to enjoy ray therapy, reinforced by the encouragement of a staff and patients who cheered every fragment of progress. <...>

April 15,1969, I had reached my goal in my rehabilitation and was told I could go home. But a serious question was still unanswered.

«Doctor, I've been working hard to get my hands back. Now I'm beginning to wonder if I ever will. «

«No, Joni. You won't ever get your hands back,» he said bluntly. «You might as well stop hoping and get used to the idea.»

The words were exactly the opposite of what I wanted to hear — what I'd been praying to hear. I wasn't prepared to accept the fact that I'd always be a quadriplegic. Forever dependent, forever helpless.

It was not terribly surprising news. I suppose I'd always suspected it. Yet, I continually hoped that I'd find some miracle cure at Rancho Los Amigos.

Tearfully, I wrote Dick a letter explaining what the doctor had said.

For some reason, God has chosen not to answer our prayers. Dickie, I'll never be able to use my hands. That means I'll always be dependent and helpless. I can never be a wife. I know you love me as I love you. Yet, God must have something else in mind for us. Let's continue to be friends, Dickie. But I want you to be free to choose other relationships. Date other girls and look for God to lead you to the right one for you for marriage. I can never be that woman.

I didn't sign it «your Joni» as I had done on my other letters to him.

This time, I simply signed it, «Joni.»

It wasn't easy for me to end that special relationship with Dick; in fact, I was frightened to end it. I loved him, didn't want to lose him, but knew I couldn't marry him — not now. My paralysis was too great a burden to place on his shoulders. And a commitment without marriage was unfair to him. Heavy waves of grief swept over me when I realized that I would never marry Dick, and I knew I had to quit thinking about past promises which couldn't, or shouldn't, be kept.

I had accepted the fate that I'd never walk again. But I had believed I could still join the ranks of those handicapped persons who drive cars, make meals, work with their hands, and put their arms around someone they love. That I'd be able to drink a glass of water, bathe myself, brush my hair, and put on my own make-up. Little things to be sure but things important enough to make the difference between one who is merely handicapped and one who is totally dependent.

Now, ever so slowly, the reality of my injury began to sink in — I was to be a quadriplegic *as long as I lived.* <...>

I was sitting outside at the ranch at Sykesville one beautiful late summer morning in 1974 when a telephone call came for me.

«Miss Eareckson, I'm calling from the *Today Show* in New York. We'd like you to come on the program and tell your story and show your drawings. Can you come?»

My heart was in my throat. The *Today Show!* «Of course,» I replied. «I'll be glad to come.» <...> My first «exhibit sponsored by PaperMate was held in Chicago at the prestigious Rubino Galleries on LaSalle Street in the shadow of the famous John Hancock Center, I exhibited my art and demonstrated my drawing for a week. During that time, I was interviewed by the *Chicago Tribune* and *Sun-Times.* I also appeared on the CBS-TV affiliate in Chicago, *The Lee Phillip Show.*

When we returned home, again a flood of mail greeted me. I began to be swamped with requests for additional interviews. Art exhibits were scheduled for Lincoln Center in New York and Atlantic Richfield Plaza in Los Angeles. Scores of churches and Christian groups contacted me to come and speak. *Women's Day, People, Teen,* and *Coronet* magazines asked for interviews. *Campus Life* did a four-page story. *Moody Monthly* and *Chrisian Life* also did stories. There were more radio and TV appearances. I could see how the Lord was going to use the *Today Show* to broaden my scope of witness and open many new doors.

4.9. THE QUIET HEART *by Norman Rosten*

Of all the people who moved into our house, I guess I remember Philip the best. He was older than I, about fourteen, sad-eyed, skinny, and had to spend most of the time in a wheelchair. He had something we'd never heard of before on our block: an enlarged heart. Pretty soon we called him jumpy because his heart could be seen jumping right under his skin when his shirt was open. The spot on his chest would go *poom-boom poom-boom* (without a sound) up and down, no bigger than a dime. It was weird. Yet after a while we got used to it. Watching it was like a game.

When Jumpy was wheeled out in his chair on the sidewalk to sit in the morning sun, he'd wave his arm and call, «It's me, fellas.» And we'd crowd around, joshing him, spinning his chair, until someone would say, «Let's see it jump, how about it, Jumpy!» And grinning shyly, he opened his shirt, as we stared at the pulsing circle of flesh — his real alive heart!

Jumpy smiled feebly. «The doctor says I'll get better. I might even go back to school after summer vacation. «We said nothing; we didn't know much about hearts, but it didn't look as though he would be in school for a long time.

I would stop into his room almost every day. He sat up in bed, reading or listening to the radio, or just leaning back looking into space. I would sometimes come in and he wouldn't see me, and the room so silent I'd think he was dead. I'd call out, «Jumpy?» And he would turn slowly, his eyes brightening. «Hi, sit down.»

We talked about all kinds of things. Baseball and horses and radios. He had a small crystal set. We wondered how music came from an inch of wire probing a piece of crystal — with no electricity! We talked about school, science, and the tutor who came to the house. That was before he got too sick and stopped studying altogether. We played cards a lot.

His mother was nice, but sad, as if she knew something was going to happen. She brought us cakes and ice-cream while we played our games. They had to be quiet games because he couldn't get excited; that made it worse, his mother explained.

Sometimes my sister would visit. She was shy, and she usually brought him some little gift, like a jelly apple or a small bag of cherries. He loved cherries.

«You look better, Philip, «my sister said on these visits. (She never called him Jumpy, she used his real name).

«Thank you,» Jumpy replied.

«You look much better than last week, honest, Philip, «she said. And he smiled his thin but intense smile. He never said much to her. She, as well, was embarrassed. She was skinny in her bathing suit and shy all the time. I was conscious of her growing up, and it made me feel a little strange at first. I found myself watching her more after that. Anyway, her growing up and Jumpy's growing up made them shy with each other. I thought he liked her, but I wasn't sure about what she felt.

Once, when we were talking about girls, Jumpy said he thought my sister was a nice kid.

«Did you ever kiss a girl?» I asked him.

«No. Did you?» «Yes,» I said.

«I don't mean sisters» he said.

I had, in fact, earlier this summer, kissed a slender light-haired girl good-night. It wasn't much of a kiss, but I recalled the warmth of her lips with a shiver. It was quick; in the movies they were long kisses, but I suppose that was for older people. Anyway, standing on the stoop was bad for your balance, and that slender girl and I just brushed faces, you might say. Still, 1 wasn't lying when I said I had kissed a girl.

«What was it like?» he wanted to know.

1 scratched my head and gulped one of the cherries. «It was like... very different. I wouldn't know how to describe it, Jumpy. All I can say is, I'd do it again if I got the chance. «

«I'd sure like to try it,» said Jumpy. «But I guess you gotta ask a girl. They just won't come over and kiss you, would they?»

I shook my head. «I don't think so. I never heard of it. Maybe if it was something special they would. «

«Well, anyway... «Jumpy's voice trailed off. «It ain't going to happen to me, I guess.» We continued to play cards.

Later, alone with her, I asked my sister, «What do you think about Jumpy?»

«You mean Philip? I hate that nickname. He's too nice to have such a nickname.» «Do you like him?»

«Oh, he's all right.» She looked at me curiously. «Why?» «Nothing. Only he asks about you a lot. He's goofy about you.» «You know what you are? You're absolutely cuckoo, «she said. I shot back, «He'd love to smooch with you. He keens saying he'd love to kiss you. What about that?»

«I'm not interested in kissing Philip,» she said imperiously. But underneath I knew the idea scared her. After all, she was just a kid, and she was growing up and thinking about things like kissing. I was. And so was everybody else, I figured.

I kept thinking of Jumpy, in bed of the time, with a doctor coming by twice a week, and not once being kissed by a girl. When I thought of all the kissing going on on the beach, and under the boardwalk, and practically everywhere — well, it was a shame about Jumpy.

He took a turn for the worse. He wasn't out of the house for days. His mother wouldn't allow any of us to come into his room. Once I peeked in and saw him lying on the bed, his head turned toward the wall. I called out softly, «Hey Jumpy.» He moved his head, lifted his arm weakly, but didn't turn. I went away. That night, the doctor arrived on a special visit. My mother met him in the hall and went inside the room with him. I tried to enter but they wouldn't allow me. I listened at the door. All I could hear were muffled voices and, I thought, a sound of weeping.

The next day, when I asked my mother what happened, she only said, «He's very sick,» and went about her work. I waited in the hall, until Jumpy's mother came out of a room. When she saw me, she said in a whisper, «My poor little boy.» She pressed my hand and went off into the street.

I pushed the door open into Jumpy's room. He was alone. I went up to the bed. I hadn't seen him for over a week, and 1 was shocked. His face seemed to be stretched thin like paper; the eyes had sunken deep into their sockets: the mouth was thin and blue. His pajama shirt was open, and I could see his heart leaping against his skin; in my ears it suddenly sounded *poom-boom poom-boom* louder and louder. I swallowed and the sound went away.

Jumpy saw me. «Boy, 1 must be sick with doctors coming around every day.»

«You look OK,» I lied.

«I don't know, I broke the mirror yesterday lookin',» he said, with that odd persisting smile playing around his mouth. «I must look like some kind of freaky ghost.»

I didn't know what to say, because he was right. I pushed his shoulder jokingly. He sighed, leaned back on the pillow, and stared at the ceiling. «Jimmy and the guys send their regards,» I said hesitatingly.

He said, «I had a dream about Jimmy. You'll never guess what it was. You won't tell him?» I shook my head. «I mean, he might think I had something against him.»

«What'd you dream?» I prodded him.

«You won't laugh? I dreamed he was dead.»

He started to laugh, and I laughed, and we both laughed so loud I thought we'd both get a stomachache. Jumpy started to cough, and I rushed to get him some water. He choked on the water and I had to slap him on the back. Then we got to talking about some other things. Baseball. The law of gravity. And, again, girls. He asked about my sister again; she hadn't been in to say hello for over a week. I mumbled some apology for her and after a while I left.

I met my sister outside. She was sitting in the sun reading a book. I bought her an ice-cream cone. She looked up, surprised. «Where'd you get the money, Mr. Rockefeller?»

«My allowance, Miss America, ha, ha.»

«You always think you're funny when you're not,» she said haughtily, licking at the ice-cream. We were alone on the bench, and I decided to bring the subject again.

«I saw Jumpy just now — I mean, Philip. He asked about you. «

She continued reading. «I was wondering. Sis... would you go up and say hello? He's pretty sick.»

«I might later on. I'm reading now, can't you see?»

«When you go up, would you do me a favor? Don't get mad.

Would you kiss him?» She stopped her reading. Her eyes widened.

«Just kiss him. Just once. Would you please?» «Why should I?»

«Well, he's awful sick — but it's not catching like a cold or anything. He's so blue. You'd cheer him up. Would you?»

She snapped her book shut and rose. «Please leave me alone or I'll tell Momma.» And she ran into the house.

Not many days later, Jumpy's mother came over to me on the street, her eyes numb. «He's dying. Any day now, the doctor says. We *mustn't feel bad. It's best such a disease.*» All that afternoon in my ear, even when I swallowed, was the sound *poom-boom poom-boom,* and any minute that heart might stop!

I spoke to my sister again, as she was leaving the kitchen after dinner. «He asked for you again.»

She was skeptical. «You're making that up.» «No,» I pleaded. «He's awfully lonely. If you'd see him for a minute, that's all, and just kiss him —»

«If you don't stop that —» She turned to go.

I gripped her arm. «Don't be a stuck-up. If a friend asks you for a kiss, is that a crime?»

«I don't like him.»

«Do you have to like a fella, I mean a friend, to kiss him, just one kiss!»

She broke away and ran to my mother, sobbing.

«I won't do it. He wants me to kiss Philip. I won't, I won't!»

My mother, startled, comforted her. «Quiet, you don't have to kiss anyone if you don't want to.» She turned to me. «What is it now?»

I kept my eyes lowered. I didn't know how to explain such a thing. «I

just asked her to kiss Jumpy. What's so terrible about it?» I was getting sore at my sister. «Anyway, she's a stuck-up!» I ran to the street, sullen, furious, defeated.

At bedtime, my sister came to my room. I could see she had come to be forgiven. Standing at the door, she said, «I'm sorry I told Momma on you. That was wrong. «I didn't answer, I'd gotten too tired thinking of Jumpy and his heart that would stop beating any minute.

She didn't go. «I hope you're not mad,» she said. «After all, I don't know Philip, not really, I mean... «Her voice trailed off in uncertainty.

«If you do it, FU give you a dollar. I promise. Gosh, how can you say you don't know him?» She was silent. «It ain't so awful kissing someone. You've kissed me lots of times. «

«Kissing you is not the same, and you know it,» she replied, wavering.

«It can't be much different with jumpy. He's my age, about. «

«The whole thing is silly, but I'll do it,» Her acceptance, finally, was so casual 1 couldn't understand ail the fuss she made earlier. What a screwloose for a sister, I thought! «When do I do it?» she asked.

«Right now,» I said. She looked calm, as though she kissed boys every day which I don't think she did, but it crossed my mind. I didn't see her much during the day. «Come on,» I said. She followed me down the hallway. We came to his door. 1 knocked softly. We entered. He was alone, his eyes half-closed. I thought he was asleep until he spoke.

«Hello. I'm glad you came. «His eyes, now fully opened, rested on my sister. She walked to the bed, her walk light, almost jaunty. «Hi, Philip. I'm sorry I haven't been up to see you lately. But you look fine. «

He smiled weakly. His face was yellowed. He opened his mouth, but his voice was so low I had to lean over to hear him. «Good night,» he said.

«Sure, Jumpy, we won't stay,» I turned to my sister and nodded to her. «We just dropped in for a quick hello. See you again tomorrow?»

«Tomorrow,» he whispered. His fingers reached over but could barely grip my hand.

«See you again,» said my sister. She leaned over the bed, her eyes tightly shut, her face moving close to his. With a cry he turned his head into the pillow. My sister looked at me, her lips trembling, and fled from the room. «Get out,» Jumpy shouted. «Leave me alone. I don't want to see anybody!» I backed slowly toward the door, stunned by his anger.

The next afternoon, it was hard for me to imagine it was him in the coffin. I thought of his small heart quiet now under his clean shirt, and the *poom-boom* in my ear was quiet, too.

My sister cried a little. She was mad at me for a long time, for months, and wouldn't talk to me. Sometimes she'd lose her temper and scream at me even when I didn't remember doing anything wrong.

4.10. **REMEMBER** *by Barbara Taylor Bradford*

Barbara Taylor Bradford was born in Leeds, Yorkshire. In 1979 she wrote her first novel, *A Woman of Substance,* and that enduring best-seller was followed by many others: *The Women in His Life, Angel,* etc. Most of her novels have been made into television miniseries. Her novels have been published in eighty-two countries and twenty-four languages.

Remember is a story of a woman haunted by the mystery of her greatest love. Television war correspondent Nicky Wells is a media superstar, courageous, beautiful, and renowned for her hard-hitting reports from the world's battlefields and trouble spots. But her life is shattered when she loses the only man she has ever truly loved, dashing English aristocrat Charles Devereux. Nicky finds solace in her work and

her friendship with photographer Cleeland Donovan, and after a romantic interlude in Provence, Nicky wonders if she might finally be able to love again. But suddenly she is forced to remember Charles Devereux when she is confronted with disturbing suspicions about this remarkable man and his mysterious double life. The novel is filled with the passion, intrigue, and suspense.

CHAPTER 16

The interior of the restaurant was as eye-catching as the exterior.

An arched ceiling, stone walls and matching floor gave it a medieval feeling, as did the high-backed chairs covered in blue-and-gold brocade velvet, the Provenзal antiques made of dark wood and the lantern-style ceiling lamps. Pretty floral cloths covered the tables, each of which had its own three-branch silver candelabra and bowl of flowers, and there were other huge arrangements of colorful blooms scattered throughout.

Because Clee had ordered the dinner while they were sitting outside on the terrace drinking champagne, they were served their first course almost immediately. Nicky had selected melon, Clee one of the specialties of the house, ravioli with truffles and leeks, which he insisted she try.

«Just one piece,» he cajoled, «it's delicious. It'll melt in your mouth.» Spearing a square of ravioli with his fork, he leaned over the table and fed it to her. He watched her eat it, his dark eyes full of love for her.

«It *is* wonderful,» she said, and dug her spoon into the sweet and succulent Cavaillon melon, which Amйlie kept insisting was the best in the whole of France. She decided Amйlie was correct.

While they waited for their main course, Clee spoke about the book and the various sequences for the photographs that he had been planning since his return from Beijing. When he had explained everything to her, he leaned back and said, «Well, what do you think?»

«It sounds great, and anyway, you know best, Clee, you really do. You've done these books before, whereas I'm just a novice — besides, I'm only writing the introduction.»

«Don't say 'only' in that way, the words are just as important as the pictures.»

«Not really. But it's nice of you to say so.»

«I was thinking of dedicating the book to Yoyo, and to the memory of Mai. How do you feel about that?»

«Oh, Clee, what a good idea. By the way, I've been wanting to tell you, I'm feeling very positive about Yoyo and have been for the past few days. I feel sure he's going to make it.»

«We've got to keep on believing that.»

The wine waiter was suddenly at their table, pouring more of the white wine with which they had commenced their meal. «It is an excellent wine, is it not, Monsieur Donovan?» he said.

«Marvelous. And I've had this particular Puligny-Montrachet before. In fact, you recommended it to me the last time I was here.»

«I believe I did,» the wine waiter responded with a deferential smile.

«I hope you like this wine, Nicky,» Clee said. «I ordered it because it has enough power to hold its own with the richest-flavored food, and the *daurade* we both chose has a rich orange sauce. Also, the fish itself is flavored with herbs. Anyway, I think this fruity Chardonnay goes well with it.» Clee shifted in his chair, turned the bottle around and studied it for a second. «This is a great label — Clos du Vieux Chвteau, Labourй-Roi, and it comes from the world's capital of Chardonnay, the village in the Cфte d'Or where no other type of grape is grown.»

Nicky sat gaping at Clee, taken aback by this unexpected display of knowledge about wine. Finding her voice, she said, «I didn't know you were a connoisseur of wine.»

«Good God, I'm not, *I'm* hardly an expert!» He looked across at her, and explained, «I just happen to like good wine, and since I live in France, I've made a point of knowing a bit about some of the best vineyards. After all, I can't always drink that plonk we make at the farm.» He frowned. «What is it, Nick? You've got the queerest look on your face.»

Nicky shivered slightly and a small nervous laugh escaped. «I had a funny sense of deja vu, as if I'd heard those exact words before, but of course I haven't.»

«We've never discussed wine before.»

No, but Charles always talked about wine, she thought, and she picked up her glass and took a sip of the Puligny-Montrachet. «It *is* good, Clee. Delicious.»

At this moment the main course arrived, accompanied by several waiters. It was served to them with quite a few elaborate flourishes. Nicky caught Clee's eye and winked at him, and he had to swallow the laughter rising in his throat.

When they were finally left alone to eat the fish, he grinned at her. «That wink and the expression on your face said more to me than a thousand words ever could.»

«Isn't that what I keep telling you?»

«And I don't recall disagreeing with you. How's the *daurade,* do you like it?»

«Yes, thank you, and it's one of my favorites. I often had it as a child when my parents brought me down to the South of France. And fish isn't fatten-mg.

«Will you stick around me if I promise to serve you only bread and water?» he said teasingly, but his eyes were serious.

Nicky noticed the expression in them and nodded. «I'll stick around, Clee —»

Putting down his fork, he said, «What are you doing in September?»

«Why?»

«You told me the network owes you a lot of time off, and I thought that you might like to come back here in September. To the farm — to be with me. I plan to take a break then, and it's lovely here at that time of year. The July and August tourists have split, and it's peaceful.»

«I'd love to come, if I've finished the script for my fall special.»

«*Try,*» he said.

«I will. I'll work like a madwoman through the rest of July and August.»

«Promise?»

«I do.»

«Don't think I won't hold you to that, because I will.» Clee brought his head closer to hers, and said, sotto voce, «I don't want you to turn around, but there's a woman over there who hasn't been able to take her eyes off you since she sat down. I have a feeling she knows you.»

«What makes you think that?»

«Because she looked at you several times, spoke to the man she is with, who eventually turned and glanced at you, very discreetly. And in between her conversation with him and bites of food, she keeps looking at you.»

«Perhaps she's seen me on television — perhaps she's a fan. Is she American?»

«I don't think so. She looks English to me. Very English, and so does the guy she's with. Okay, she's talking to a waiter, you can look now.»

Nicky twisted in her chair and turned her head slightly. She saw the woman immediately, and her breath caught in her throat; she felt a tightening in her chest. She was about to turn back to Clee when the woman looked across the room.

Two pairs of blue eyes met and held.

The woman smiled then, her whole face lighting up with obvious pleasure.

Nicky smiled in return and lifted her hand in a small gesture of acknowledgment.

The woman spoke to her companion, who swung his head, then swiveled around in his chair and beamed at Nicky.

Nicky glanced at Clee and explained, «They're old friends, I must go and have a quick word with them. Please excuse me.»

She got up and walked across the room, and Clee could not help wondering who they were. Nicky's voice had sounded odd, breathless, even strained. She's uptight all of a sudden, he decided, and he sat back in his chair, watching, filled with curiosity.

«Anne, how lovely to see you,» Nicky said when she came up to the other table.

«And you, my darling,» Anne responded, immediately rising, holding her close for a moment.

The man also got to his feet, and a second later he too was hugging Nicky. «You look wonderful, my dear, more beautiful than ever, if I may say so.»

«Oh Philip, thank you, you look pretty terrific yourself. And so do you, Anne. Please sit down, both of you, *please.*»

They did so, and Nicky leaned against the back of Anne's chair, bending slightly forward in order to speak to them. «You must think I'm very rude, Anne, I haven't been in touch for ages. I have no excuse, except that I've been traveling the world for my work.»

«Darling, don't apologize, I understand perfectly. You lead a frightfully busy life. But I must admit, I have missed your phone calls — quite a lot, actually, Nicky. However, I do realize you have another life to lead

now.» Anne gazed up into her face, smiling faintly. They exchanged a long look, full of understanding, then Anne said, «Who is that awfully attractive man you're with, Nicky?»

«An old friend — a colleague. Cleeland Donovan.»

«The famous war photographer?» Philip asked.

«Yes,» Nicky said.

«Brilliant chap. I have several of his books, and I recently saw some of the most remarkable pictures that he took in Beijing.»

«In *Paris Match,* perhaps,» Nicky said. «We were there together, covering the crackdown.»

«Nasty business that. Very tragic outcome,» Philip said.

«The bloodshed was unbelievable,» Nicky told him, and turned to look at Anne. «Are you here on vacation?»

«Yes. We're staying with friends of Philip's at Tarascon, not far from Saint-Rйmy. Are you on holiday, too?»

Nicky nodded. «Clee has a farm between Saint-Remy and Aix, a lovely old *mas,* and I've just spent a week there, resting. Clee came down for the weekend. We were both pretty done in after China.»

«I can well imagine,» Anne said. «I do wish you would come over to Tarascon with your friend, for lunch or dinner one day. Will you?»

«It's kind of you to invite us, Anne, but I'm afraid I have to be back in New York on Monday. I'm leaving for Paris tomorrow morning.»

«What a pity, it would have been so nice to catch up —» Anne reached out and put her hand on Nicky's arm. «I've missed you.»

«Oh, Anne, I know, I've missed you too, and it's all my fault. I've been so... neglectful.»

Anne smiled, but made no comment.

Philip volunteered, «Perhaps we can have coffee later?»

«We've almost finished dinner, Philip, and you and Anne are just starting.» Her smile was rueful as she explained, «I have to be up at the crack of dawn tomorrow, to drive to Marseilles. I have an early plane to Paris.»

«C'est dommage,» he said, sounding as disappointed as Anne had only a moment ago.

Nicky took her leave of them graciously and returned to the table. «I'm sorry. That took longer than I expected.»

«Who are they?»

«English friends.» <...>

4.11. Beach Music *by Pat Conroy*

Pat Conroy, a 1967 graduate of The Citadel, is America's outstanding storyteller. *Beach Music* delivers the story of Jack McCall, an American expatriate in Rome, scarred by tragedy and betrayal. His desperate desire to find peace after his wife's suicide draws him into a painful, intimate search for the one haunting secret in his family's past that can heal his anguished heart. *Beach Music* sings with life's pain and glory.

CHAPTER 5

I drove Martha to the Rome airport, and once there she checked and rechecked her tickets to South Carolina as soldiers from the Italian Army walked by her carrying machine guns.

«I'll never get used to all these machine guns in airports,» she said.

«It cuts down on shoplifting,» I said. «Let me buy you a cappuccino here. They won't let me go to the gate with you.»

«Because of terrorism.»

«I guess. The Red Brigade's about petered out. But the PLO's still frisky. Libya's making noise. The IRA's around. Even a liberation movement in Corsica.»

«Why do you live here with all this going on?»

«Wasn't Atlanta the murder capital of the U. S. last year?»

«Yes, but the airport's perfectly safe,» she said.

We bought cappuccinos and watched a group of brilliantly clad Saudis enter the building and pass a large contingent from Ghana swathed in their native finery. It seemed a citizen from every country would pass you by if you only stood in the Rome airport long enough, and this connection to the whole world never failed to thrill me. I could smell the love of travel here and feel that rush of adrenaline in travelers as they glanced up at departure boards and studied the small numbers on their neatly inscribed tickets. An airport was a place where I could actually see time move. People sifted through doors and gates like sand through an hourglass.

«I don't have to tell you this, Jack. Leah's a magnificent child. You're doing a splendid job.»

«I'm just watching, Martha. She's raising herself.»

«I wish you'd bring her back home.»

«I don't think so,» I said, as softly as I could. «I'm sorry, Martha.»

«I can promise there'll be no scenes.»

«How can you promise that? Not with your father.»

«Did you always hate him?» she asked gently. «Even when you were a child? Our houses backed up to each other.»

«No, I only got to hate him after I really got to know the guy. I think it started when he sat shiva when Shyla married me.»

«My mother begged him not to.»

«And so when he sat shiva for a second time after Shyla's death my high regard for him only increased.»

«He's a good Jew. He was right to sit shiva then.»

«And he was dead fucking wrong to do it after she married me,» I exploded.

«Again, he thought he was being a good Jew.»

«And a bad human being. Do you like your father, Martha? Shyla sure didn't.»

Martha was thoughtful for a moment.

«I respect him, Jack. Pity him. For all he's been through.»

«Whatever he went through, he's sure as hell paid the world back in spades.»

«He says that your keeping him away from his granddaughter's the cruelest thing he's faced,» Martha said.

«Good. Jack McCall surges past World War II in a nose-to-nose race to see who can make George Fox suffer most.»

«He can't help who, he is or what makes him suffer,» Martha said.

«Neither can I, Martha. Now it's time to get you through security.»

At the security gate, we embraced and held each other for a long moment.

«I appreciate your doing this, Martha. It was a grand gesture. You took a chance, and I appreciate it.»

«I hope it's only the start. We'd like Leah to be part of our life, Jack. My mother wants to see you badly.»

«Tell her thanks. I'll think about it.»

«You and Shyla, Jack,» Martha said wonderingly. «I never knew what made it work.»

«Neither did anyone else,» I said as Martha turned toward the opaque gazes of five heavily armed airport guards.

I returned to my apartment and spent the rest of the day working on the article about Venice and the Gritti Palace. I like writing about strange cities and cuisines because it keeps me at arm's length from the subjects that are too close to me.

To capture the sense of place in each country I visit, I work hard at turning homesickness into a kind of scripture as I describe what the native-born cherish most about their own countries. Writing about Venice always presents a challenge. The city is a peacock tail unfurled in the Adriatic and the sheer infinity of its water-dazzled charms makes you long for a new secret language brimming with untried words that can only be used when describing Venice to strangers. Venice has always brought me face to face with the insufficiency of language when confronted by such timeless beauty. I've put in the hours trying to make the overvisited city mine and mine alone. I've tried to notice things that would surprise even Venetians.

When I finished, I typed out four recipes I had received from different Venetian chefs, then addressed the article to the editor of *The Sophisticated Traveler* at *The New York Times*. Having given the package to the *portiere* I walked across the Tiber to the shul Leah attended once a week.

Leah came out surrounded by other children, the boys all wearing delicate little yarmulkes, small as mittens. She ran toward me when she saw me and I picked her up and spun us both around in the street.

«Did Aunt Martha catch her plane?» Leah asked. «I just love her, Daddy. We had so much to talk about.»

«She worships you, sweetheart. But so does everyone else.»

«She asked me a question I couldn't answer,» she said as we began to walk.

«What was it?»

«Am I Jewish, Daddy?» Leah asked. «Martha asked me that and the

rabbi asks it all the time. The rabbi doesn't like it that I go to a Catholic school.»

«Suor Rosaria doesn't like it that you go to shul. But according to Jewish law, you're Jewish.»

«But you?» she asked. «According to you, what am I?»

«I don't know, Leah,» I admitted as we walked through the noisy streets of Trastevere toward the river. «Religion's strange to me. I grew up Catholic, yet the Church hurt me. It damaged me and made me afraid of the world. But it also filled me with wonder. Your mother was a Jew and proud of it. She'd want you raised as a Jew, so that's why I send you to shul.»

«What do you want me to be?»

«What I want is not important. You can choose for yourself. What I'd like is for you to study both and reject both.»

«Do they worship different gods?» she asked.

«No, honey. I think it's the same cat. Look, I know I'm going to pay for this in the future. You'll grow up without religious roots and when you're eighteen I'll find you dressed in saffron Hare Krishna robes with your head shaved, chanting Hindi, and playing a tambourine in the Atlanta airport.»

«I just want to know if I'm a Jew or a Catholic.»

«You pick, darling.» And I squeezed her hand.

«Martha says that I'm a Jew.»

«If that's what you want to be, then that's what you are. I'd love for you to be Jewish. Nothing would irritate my family more.»

«What's South Carolina like?» Leah asked, changing the subject.

«Horrible. Very ugly and depressing to look at. It smells bad all the time and the ground's covered with rattlesnakes. It has laws making all children slaves from the time ' they're born until they're eighteen.

The state doesn't allow ice cream or candy to be sold inside the state line and requires all kids to eat five pounds of brussels sprouts a day.»

«I hate brussels sprouts.»

«That's only the start. All kittens and puppy dogs are drowned as soon as they're born. Stuff like that. You never want to go there. Trust me.»

«Aunt Martha said it was beautiful and that she wanted me to come visit her next summer. May I go?» We walked on without my responding.

«What kind of ice cream do you want?» I asked as we walked into the bar near the Piazza Trilussa. *«Limone o fragola?»*

«Fragola,» she said, «but that didn't answer my question.»

«You want to eat five pounds of brussels sprouts a day and be sold into slavery?»

«You just say those things so I won't ask about Mama.»

We ate our cones in silence. Mine was hazelnut, which reminds me of smoke and ice and darkness. Leah had chosen the strawberry ice cream today. Each day, she alternated between the taste of lemons and strawberries; it was one way she brought a sense of order and structure to her motherless life.

On the Ponte Sisto, we stopped and looked down at the Tiber, its flow quickening as it neared the rapids close to the Isola Tiberina. Two elderly fishermen were casting their lines into the river, but I knew I lacked the raw physical courage required to eat a fish caught in those impure waters. Even in the softest light, the Tiber looked rheumy and colicky.

«I know all about Mama,» Leah said, licking her cone.

«If Martha said one word...»

«She didn't,» Leah jumped in quickly. «I've known for a long time now.»

«How'd you find out?» I said, careful not to look at her, keeping my eyes on the fishermen.

«I heard Maria talking to the *portiere,*» she said. «They didn't know I was listening.»

«What did they say?»

«That Mama killed herself by jumping off a bridge,» Leah said, and as the words came out of my pretty, over-serious daughter, I could feel the ruthless slipping of my heart. She tried to say it matter-of-factly, but the words resonated with the awful authority of Shyla's act. At that very moment, I knew that by treating her as an equal, I had robbed her of any chance of being a child. Worse, I had allowed Leah to mother me, stealing from a generous, eager child what my own mother had rarely been known to offer me. I had let Leah carry my implacable sorrow, and turned her childhood into a duty.

«Maria said my mother was burning in hell. That's what happens to people who kill themselves.»

«No,» I said, kneeling beside her and gathering her to me. I tried to see if she was crying, but could see nothing through my own tears.

«Your mother was the sweetest, finest woman I've ever met, Leah. No God would ever hurt a woman that decent and good. No God would say a word to a woman who suffered so much. If a God like that exists, I spit on that God. Do you understand?»

«No,» she said.

«Your mother had periods of great sadness,» I whispered. «She would feel them coming and warn me that she was going away for a while. But she'd be back. There were doctors, hospitals. They gave her pills, did everything they could; and she'd always come back. Except the last time.»

«She must have been very sad, Daddy,» Leah said, crying openly now.

«She was.»

«Couldn't you help her?»

«I tried to help her, Leah. You can be sure of that.»

«Was it me? Was she unhappy when I was born?» Leah asked.

I knelt and held her close again, letting her cry long and hard, and waited for her to slow down before I spoke.

«There never was a baby loved like your mother loved you. Her eyes filled up with love whenever she looked at you. She couldn't keep her hands off you, wanted to breastfeed you forever. Shyla loved every single thing about you.»

«Then why, Daddy? Why?»

«I don't know, darling. But I'll try to tell you everything I understand. I promise if you'll remove the strawberry ice cream cone from the back of my neck.»

We both laughed and dried each other's tears with the napkins that had come with the cones. I knelt down on one knee and let Leah wipe the ice cream from my shirt and neck. Two diminutive nuns approached us on the bridge, and when I made eye contact with one of them, she looked to the ground, shy as a whelk.

«Do you think it hurt?» Leah asked. «When she hit the water?»

«I don't think she was feeling much. She'd taken a bunch of pills before driving to the bridge.»

«The bridge, Daddy,» she said. «Was it higher than this?»

«Much higher.»

«Do you think she was thinking of the night at the beach? When the house fell into the sea? When she fell in love with you?»

«No, darling. She had just come to a time in her life when she couldn't go on.»

«It's too sad. It's just too sad,» Leah said.

«That's why I couldn't tell you. That's why I never wanted this day to come. Why didn't you ask me all this when you found out?»

«I knew you'd cry, Daddy. I didn't want to make you unhappy.»

«It's my job to be unhappy,» I said, stroking her dark hair. «You don't have to worry about me. Tell me everything you're thinking.»

«That's not what you said. You said our job was to worry about each other.»

I picked my precious child up in my arms, squeezed her tightly, then hoisted her onto my broad shoulders.

«Now you know, kid. You'll be learning to live with your mama's death for the rest of your life. But me and you are a team and we're gonna have a hell of a good time. Got it?»

«Got it,» Leah said, still crying. «Did you say any of this to Aunt Martha?» «No, I thought you'd get mad at her. I want to visit her. I want to meet the rest of my family, Daddy,» she said, with all the equanimity of a stubbornly precocious child.

4.12. SCARLET FEATHER *by Maeve Binchy*

Maeve Binchy is a remarkably gifted writer, a grand storyteller in the finest Irish tradition. Maeve Binchy lives in Dalkey, Ireland, with her husband, writer Gordon Snell. Binchy's latest novel is transforming storytelling into art.

They met in cooking school and became fast friends with a common dream. Now Cathy Scarlet and Tom Feather hope to take Dublin by storm with their newly formed catering company, aptly dubbed «Scarlet Feather.» Nor everyone, however, shares their optimism. Cathy's mother-in-law disapproves of both Cathy and her new «hobby», while

> Cathy's husband, Neil, pays no mind to anything — except his work as a civil rights lawyer. And then there's Tom's family, who expects him to follow in his father's footsteps, and an ambitious girlfriend who's struggling with career dreams of her own. Between friends and families, ups and downs, heartaches and joys, Cathy Scarlet and Tom Feather are about to embark on the most maddening — and exhilarating — years of their lives.

<...> «Miss Burke has booked a table for two,» James Byrne said as he came into Quentin's.

«This way, Mr. Byrne.» Brenda Brennan was always amazed by the strange way people in Dublin turned up with the most unlikely companions. Whoever would have thought that these two would have known each other?

«I thought we'd be less likely to get emotional and shout at each other here,» Shona said.

«Not a restaurant known for its shouting, I agree,» James Byrne said.

They chose from the set lunch menu, and ordered a glass of wine each.

«I shouldn't have said that you taught me never to love again, that was going too far,» Shona began.

«If it was what you felt, and I pray God it will not always be this way, then you were perfectly right to say it,» he replied.

«Can you tell me exactly what happened? I won't interrupt.»

And in a soft voice, without looking for pity, he told her the story. How he and Una couldn't have children. They had been for every kind of test. All the fertility treatment they had thirty years ago wasn't like it is nowadays. Nothing worked. And then this was the time that more and more girls who had babies outside marriage were keeping them, which, though very admirable and right, did mean that there was no pool of children for those who wanted to adopt them. However, the

social services were always willing to help, and there was fostering. You were always told that your foster child was on loan. You had to understand that you were minding her until it was possible for her to be returned to her parents. There had been a problem in Shona's home. Her parents had come from Dublin to the West to make a fresh start, but it hadn't worked. Her mother had found suppliers and dealers there as well as in Dublin, and in many ways ij was worse for her because now she had no extended family to fall back on. Shona's father had not been a tower of strength. The Byrnes had been given the toddler Shona, aged three and a half. Other relations had taken her sisters anal brother. They had loved her, no one could have asked for a more wonderful child. They had always told her about her real mother and father. But they had seemed shadowy figures to her, people much less real and exciting than *Goldilocks* or the *Turf-cutter's Donkey* or the other stories they told her. And the years went on, Shona went to school and made lots of friends.

«Carrie and Bebe,» Shona said. Remembering.

And she turned out to be very bright at school.

«You sat for hours and taught me,» Shona said. «I was never bright, Carrie and Bebe weren't, my sisters weren't either in the homes they were in; it was only because you spent such time there, looking things up for me, explaining over and over.»

«You remember?» He was pleased.

«Some of it, yes indeed,» she said.

The waiter arrived with their first course. They stopped talking to smile their thanks at him, and when he had gone they continued. He told her of the shopping trips, how they often went out intending to buy a winter coat for Una or a pair of shoes for himself, and they saw something for Shona which they bought instead.

«I'm not trying to tell you how much we spent as if I want to be thanked for it; we had plenty of money. Just want you to know that

you were the center of our lives, and no decision in that house, from what kind of cornflakes we ate right up to where we would go on holidays, was made without thinking of you. It's not looking for thanks; we wished we could have done more... I just wanted you to know what a great hole you left in our lives when you had to go.»

The year they had to give her back, they had planned to take her to London to go to the Science Museum.

«I didn't know that,» she said. «I've never been there.»

«It was to be a surprise, and well, obviously, when you had to go back we didn't tell you.»

«Did I really have to go back, James?»

«Oh, Shona, you did, and they told us that the best thing we could do for you was not to cry and tell you we'd miss you. They told us that you'd be with your family, and that it would be hard enough after ten years without us weeping and wailing and making it worse for you, so we were very strong and pretended that this was great news.»

«And I thought, always thought that you were relieved to be rid of *me*» Her voice was flat.

«Ah, Shona, child, you *couldn't* have thought that. Not seriously?»

«What else could I think? No letters, I looked every day. You were both so good at writing to people, I couldn't believe you didn't write to me.»

«We were told not to, so as not to unsettle you.»

«I couldn't have been more unsettled than I was. I played it over and over in my mind that day. There were no tears when I went. I cried. I remember I said I wanted to stay, and you stood there like two stones saying that this was what we all wanted, and I was to tell my mother and sisters that I was delighted to see them.»

«I'll tell you about that day, and then you tell me. We watched the car go down the drive and away from us. You never looked back.»

«I hated you so much for handing me over.»

«And we went back into the house, and I wondered would we have a cup of tea and Una said, 'What for? ' And the words hung there. What *was* the point of putting the kettle on, or indeed getting up in the morning, when you weren't there to share it? So the day went on, and Una sat in the kitchen looking out in the garden, and I sat in the hall looking at the door, for I suppose half an hour. Then she came out to the hall to me and said, 'James, something odd has happened, all the clocks have stopped. They stopped at a quarter to six. ' And I said, but that *is* the time, it *is* a quarter to six. And then she wanted to know was that the morning or the evening. And that was the beginning of it, Shona, her mind started to go that afternoon, she thought you had been gone for five or six hours, she thought it must be nearly midnight. I brought her out and showed her the sky, I turned on the radio. She said you had left hours ago, you weren't forty minutes out of the house, and her mind started to go.»

«And she was so clever, so well read and everything,» Shona sighed.

«The last conversation we had was the night before you left. She wanted us to run away with you, change our names, go to England maybe, start again. I had to tell her that we couldn't, we would have nothing, we'd be on the run and we'd have to give you up eventually.»

«She wanted to do that?»

«So did I, Shona, but how could I sell the house, get another job, do anything to provide for you if we had to take false names? They'd be looking for us everywhere, people that stole a child. And since we couldn't do it, what we wanted to do, that's why it seemed right to go along with what had to be done.»

«I see,» she said.

«And we were allowed to write back if you wrote to us, but you never did. Tell me how the day turned out for you,» he asked.

She paused for a while and he didn't hurry her. She remembered that from the past too. Dad would always wait until you got your thoughts together.

«It was a summer day, and the light was behind us all the way as we drove to Dublin because the sun was setting in the west. And I was in the back of the car and they talked to each other, the two women, I didn't know who they were, or that they were social workers. I suppose they were nice enough. We stopped in a town on the way and they bought me a burger and chips, and even though I was hungry I threw it away. Anyway, I got back to the house and the woman they said was my mother looked desperate. She had long, matted hair that she hadn't washed for weeks, and she smoked all the time. She looked at me and said, 'Will you look at the cut of you. ' That's all she said, she hadn't seen me for ten years and that was her greeting.»

«What did you say to her?» James asked.

«I was fourteen. I said nothing.»

The silence rested there between them, but it wasn't awkward. He simply waited for her to speak again.

«And then in a few days I knew what I had to do, I had to get out, you didn't want me... I thought, so I couldn't go back to you, I had to make my own way and maybe I could do it through school. So I began the life that I still lead, the life of a workaholic. My sisters were idlers, they did nothing except tell me I was full of airs and graces and I didn't like the milk carton on the table. 'She wants a milk jug, ' they used to mock me. But I had great teachers. I told one, a Mrs. Ryan, that things were bad at home, she was so nice. She said that things are always bad at home, that is the way the world runs, so I thought she had a lousy time too. It was only years later I learned that she had a great life. She taught me to type in lunch hours, and used to let me use the school machine to practice on. And there were others too; it was a tough city school, so they loved someone who was making an effort to

do something rather than shoplift or get pregnant at sixteen.»

«And when you left?»

«Ah, but before that I had to fight to stay and finish. They wanted me to work in the factory. I refused. I was sixteen. I wanted to get my diploma and a life. My mother was using again, I didn't care anymore. All I needed was somewhere to work, and I had my own room. Because the others left. I used to take a small amount of the Welfare money every week, and tried to make an evening meal every night, potatoes, lentils, and you could get cheap, squashy tomatoes. Sometimes she was able to take a mug of soup, but mainly she didn't bother. And I'd love to have gone to university. I had enough points and everything, but the only way that I could get out of there was to get a job, so I went to work the day I finished my exams.»

«What did you do?»

«I moved out of home and worked in a travel agency as a junior. I learned everything I could in six months. I got a proper job in another travel agency. I got two holidays, one in Italy, one in Spain. The only holidays I ever had in my whole life. I've been to London on work a few times, but I never had another holiday. I remember the excitement of getting a passport. Then I worked in a dress shop, then a hotel and by the time the job came up at Hayward's I was ready for it.»

«And your... mother?»

«I went to see her every week... You see, you did teach me manners after all. And how to behave. Sometimes she was so stoned she hardly knew who I was; other times she was depressed. I used to take her soup; some weeks she drank it, others I used to find it with mould on it. I wasn't the only martyr, my sisters went in too. We didn't fight, ever. They just sneered at me. Lady Muck, they called me in those early days. I said nothing; as time passed they got indifferent to me, as I to them. Now it's like meeting strangers. At the funeral I looked at them and I realized I knew nothing about them at all, or they about me.»

James took out a paper tissue and wiped his eyes.

«You finally realized you don't have to wash hankies. Mum and I used to say that you were the last of the folded-linen variety...»

She stopped suddenly. She realized that she had called his dead wife «Mum» after all these years. She held out her hand at the same time as he did.

«What a waste,» he said.

«Of so many lives,» she agreed.

«We must make very sure it doesn't happen anymore, Shona.»

«I'm more grateful than I can say that you got in touch,» she said.

«Well. I learned how to cook three dinners; you've only had one, there are still two to go,» he said, wondering had he gone too far.

«Saturday?» Shona suggested. «I don't know when I last had something to look forward to on a Saturday night.» (p. 412—419)

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